# Street & Smith's
FOOTBALL

A Man for All Seasons: J.J. Watt strives to make as big an impact off the field as he does on it.

32 IMPACT NEWCOMERS

192 PAGES OF IN-DEPTH TEAM PREVIEWS

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WE'RE PICKING THE RAMS!

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DEFENSE WINS?
POSTSEASON DEFENSIVE STATS SUGGEST OTHERWISE

Davante Adams Green Bay Packers
Adam Thielen Minnesota Vikings

DRAFT REPORTS
FOR EVERY FRANCHISE

PLUS
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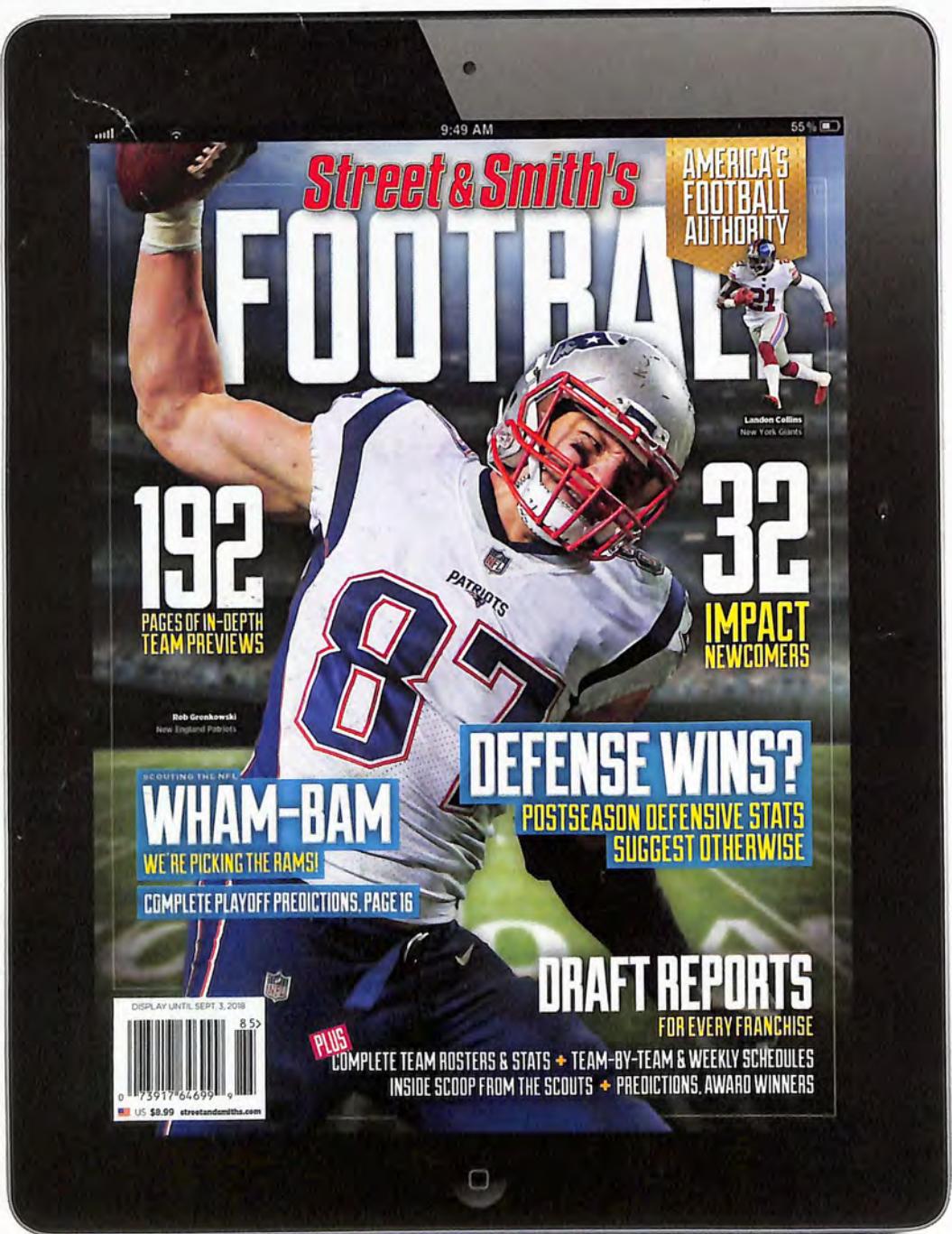
Beware the Trojan horse

It seems like every four years or so there's a quarterback with movie star looks who comes out of the University of Southern California that the pro football world becomes enamored with. For this year's NFL Draft, it was Sam Darnold, the 6-3, 225-pound junior from Capistrano Beach, Calif., who was picked No. 3 overall by the New York Jets.

They say Darnold has all the physical tools you'd look for in a franchise quarterback, but his stock rose because scouts were impressed by his instincts for buying time in the pocket and extending plays, making key completions downfield rather than tucking and running.

They also say he has great peripheral vision and accuracy, but those qualities certainly weren't on display in January's Cotton Bowl when Darnold completed only 26 passes in 45 attempts with no touchdowns and one interception in a resounding 24-7 loss to Ohio State. And although his offensive line certainly was a good bit weaker in 2017, it's troubling that both his completion rate and TD/interception ratio actually got worse over his sophomore campaign—from 67.2 to 63.1 and 31/9 to 26/13. Ball security has always been an issue for Darnold, having turned it over 36 times (22 interceptions, 14 lost fumbles) in 24 games at USC.

Darnold certainly provided many heroics in two years as a starter for the Trojans, and he could well end up being the exception to the rule, like Carson Palmer, the No. 1 overall pick in 2003 who went on to have a very good, long NFL career.

The odds are against him, however. The list of highly drafted USC quarterbacks who have flamed-out in the pros is eye-catching, from first-rounders Matt Leinart (2006), Mark Sanchez (2009) and Todd Marinovich (1991); to third-rounder Cody Kessler (2016); fourth-rounders Matt Barkley (2013), Paul McDonald (1980) and Rob Johnson (1995); and fifth-rounder John David Booty (2008).

Leinart won the Heisman Trophy and a national title for USC in 2004. He was 37-2 as a three-year starter for the Trojans, but in the NFL he started only seven games in the six years after his rookie season. In 33 games as a pro, he threw 21 interceptions, 15 touchdowns and was sacked 30 times. He is the poster boy for failed professional USC signal-callers. But Leinart has plenty of company to show NFL teams that history isn't on their side when drafting ex-Trojans for the most important position on the field.

Of the four Pac-12 schools in California, USC is the only one that has never had a former QB start and win a Super Bowl game. And interestingly, the ex-Trojans outside of Palmer who have had some sustained success in the NFL weren't highly rated by the scouts and were drafted late as afterthoughts or not chosen at all: 1989 sixth-rounder Rodney Peete (15 NFL seasons, 87 starts), 1975 seventh-rounder Pat Haden (6, 55), 1977 sixth-rounder Vince Evans (15, 39) and undrafted 1987 USC product Sean Salisbury, who played in more NFL games (40) than Leinart (33).

So good luck with that, Jets. There's not much historic data, analytics or karma out there to indicate that Darnold is going to be another Carson Palmer.

Or a Rodney Peete, for that matter.

Scott Smith

Editor, Street & Smith's Yearbooks
🐦 @ss_SSyearbooks

DARNOLD: RALPH FRESO / AP

Street & Smith's

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Not only did three-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year J.J. Watt win the 2018 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award in February, he also was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by *Time* magazine in April. **PAGE 7**

WATT: JEFF LEWIS / AP

How today's players stack up to the NFL's all-time greats.

→ **Active players in bold and caps**   → **Compiled by Will Long**

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MATT RYAN	3,630
Kerry Collins	3,487
Joe Montana	3,409
Dan Fouts	3,297
JOE FLACCO	3,267
Matt Hasselbeck	3,222
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Donovan McNabb	3,170
Dave Krieg	3,105
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Terrell Owens	1,078
Anquan Boldin	1,076
Reggie Wayne	1,070
Andre Johnson	1,062
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Derrick Mason	943
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Torry Holt	920
Wes Welker	903
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Jimmy Smith	862
Muhsin Muhammad	860
Irving Fryar	851
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Larry Centers	827
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Charlie Joiner	750
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Isaac Bruce	15,208
Tony Gonzalez	15,127
Tim Brown	14,934
Steve Smith Sr.	14,731
Marvin Harrison	14,580
Reggie Wayne	14,345
Andre Johnson	14,185
James Lofton	14,004
Cris Carter	13,899
Anquan Boldin	13,779
Henry Ellard	13,777
Torry Holt	13,382
Andre Reed	13,198
Steve Largent	13,089
Irving Fryar	12,785
Art Monk	12,721
Jason Witten	12,448
Jimmy Smith	12,287
BRANDON MARSHALL	12,215
Charlie Joiner	12,146
Hines Ward	12,083
Derrick Mason	12,061
Michael Irvin	11,904
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ANTONIO GATES	11,508
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Joey Galloway	10,950
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Keyshawn Johnson	10,571
Harold Jackson	10,372
Santana Moss	10,283
Lance Alworth	10,266
Andre Rison	10,205
Donald Driver	10,137
Shannon Sharpe	10,060
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Jack Butler	52
Bobby Dillon	52
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Chris Doleman	150.5
Michael Strahan	141.5
Jason Taylor	139.5
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Richard Dent	137.5
John Randle	137.5
Jared Allen	136.0
John Abraham	133.5
Leslie O'Neal	132.5
Lawrence Taylor	132.5
Rickey Jackson	128.0
Derrick Thomas	126.5
DWIGHT FREENEY	125.5
TERRELL SUGGS	125.5
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Neil Smith	104.5
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Charles Haley	100.5
Andre Tippett	100.0
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Mario Williams	97.5
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Trevor Pryce	91.0
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Bryant Young	89.5
Ken Harvey	89.0
Leonard Little	87.5
Justin Smith	87.0
Willie McGinest	86.0
Osi Umenyiora	85.0
JAMES HARRISON	84.5
Greg Ellis	84.0
Howie Long	84.0
La'Roi Glover	83.5
Leonard Marshall	83.5
VON MILLER	83.5

Mark it down ... 32-year-old Sean McVay will become the youngest coach to win a Super Bowl title thanks to another 2,000-plus total yards from running back Todd Gurley.

WE'RE BULLISH ON THE RAMS

BY SCOTT SMITH
Editor

omewhere, the Fearsome Foursome is feeling just a bit more fearsome today.

Rosey Grier is the only member of arguably the NFL's greatest defensive line who's still living, but Merlin Olsen, Deacon Jones and Lamar Lundy must be looking down proudly knowing that their beloved Rams are back in Los Angeles and, what's more, a prime contender this season for the Super Bowl.

But they're much more than just a prime contender, because we're picking them to win it all. No offense has more firepower, no defense has more playmakers, no coach is more innovative and in tune with his players.

Yes, Jared Goff will throw for 4,000 yards for the first time in his career.

Yes, Todd Gurley will top 2,000 combined yards rushing and receiving like he did last year.

Yes, Aaron Donald will continue to be the best defensive lineman in football, a

playmaker who'll one day join Olsen and Jones in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

And, yes–you can mark it down–Sean McVay, 32, will become the youngest coach to win the NFL's ultimate prize when the Rams beat Pittsburgh in the Super Bowl next February at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

It will be the first time the Los Angeles Rams have won the Super Bowl and, no, I'm not counting the St. Louis version that took the NFL title in 1999, which played on artificial turf ... in a dome ... for a coach (Dick Vermeil) who's better known for leading the Philadelphia Eagles than any other team.

You can have your "Greatest Show on Turf."

Rams were meant to roam outdoors on natural grass in the L.A. Memorial Coliseum where the Los Angeles Rams have played since 1946–not inside the The Dome at America's Center (the name itself is nauseating) on something artificial in Missouri.

So this one's for all of those old-school Rams we knew and loved who took the L.A. Rams to their only Super Bowl

in 1979, where they lost to, ironically, the Pittsburgh Steelers. That team was ram-tough in the trenches, like all Rams teams were back in Los Angeles, and led by maybe the greatest offensive lineman of all time, Jackie Slater, along with two incredibly fierce defensive ends in Jack Youngblood and Fred Dryer. Oh, and their middle linebacker was a guy nicknamed "Hacksaw," Jack Reynolds, for a reason.

But I'd stack Donald up against any of them. He's our choice for NFL Defensive Player of the Year.

Oh, and we're also picking McVay for Coach of the Year. Here's another irony, by the way: McVay would eclipse his Steelers counterpart, Mike Tomlin, to become the youngest Super Bowl-winning coach.

Yes, you could say we're "bullish" on the Rams. They have a lot in common with those great Los Angeles teams from the 1960s and '70s.

The big difference between this version and the '79 version, however, is that these guys are going to beat the Steelers in the big game.

THE NFL'S MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Texans defensive end J.J. Watt says his comeback is on track and he's hopeful of making as big an impact on the field in 2018 as he has off of it since fracturing his leg last October.

BY JOHN McCLAIN | *Houston Chronicle*

Seldom does a day go by without Houston Texans defensive end J.J. Watt being asked if he can regain the form that allowed him to be voted NFL Defensive Player of the Year three times, tying Hall-of-Fame linebacker Lawrence Taylor for the most in history.

It's a question Watt is unable to answer because he doesn't know. He's still undergoing rehabilitation for surgery that repaired a fractured tibial plateau in his left leg, a season-ending injury he suffered in the fifth game last season.

Houston coach Bill O'Brien cautions those who predict Watt will never be the same player he was during his first five seasons in which he didn't miss a start.

"This is my fifth year here, and one thing I've learned is you should never bet against J.J. Watt," O'Brien says. "He's got a great attitude, and watching all the hard work he puts in every day, he'll be back at full strength."

The Texans believe Watt will be 100 percent for the start of the season, but they'll take it easy on him in training camp, just as they did last year when he was recovering from a second back surgery.

"I've had a good offseason so far," Watt says in between rehab exercises. "I could tell you I'm feeling unbelievable, or I could tell you I'm feeling bad. Nobody's going to believe me if I tell you how good I'm feeling, and it wouldn't matter, anyway, until the season starts. But I'm really looking forward to the season."

Watt, who turned 29 in March, saved a lot of wear and tear on his body from beatings against double- and triple-team blocks the last two seasons when he played in only eight games. He'll gladly absorb that kind of punishment if he can stay on the field the entire season for the first time since 2015.

"It's a tough injury with a long recovery, but I love the game, and I love the competition," he says. "I love waking up every day with a chance to better myself and help my team."

Last season, without Watt and 12 other starters who spent time on injured reserve, the 4-12 Texans went from 11th to worst in both total and scoring defense a year after going 9-7 and reaching the divisional round of the playoffs.

"I broke my back, and I broke my leg, but I still have passion for the game," Watt says. "We have a common goal of winning as many games as we can and having fun doing it."

Watt had to take breaks in his rehab to accept honors and awards for helping raise more than $37 million for a Hurricane Harvey relief fund that has benefited the Houston area and southeast Texas.

Watt won the 2018 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award in February and was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by *Time* magazine in April.

"Everything you do on the field pales in comparison to what you do off the field," Watt says. "At the end of my life, if I'm remembered as a good football player—and that's all I'm remembered for—then I did a poor job.

"When I go to my grave, I want to be remembered as a guy who helped people. I want to make my family proud, be the best person I can be and leave the world a little bit better."

During his rehab, Watt developed a close relationship with second-year Texans quarterback Deshaun Watson, who's recovering from a torn ACL and is expected to be ready for the start of training camp.

Watt and Watson spent months rehabbing together and posted pictures and videos on Instagram and Twitter of them undergoing treatment and working out.

"We're always in there together," Watson says. "He's keeping me motivated, and I'm keeping him motivated. If one of us is having a bad day, we pick each other up.

"He's been focused on getting back stronger and becoming an even better player than he was before."

For Watt, shown here helping with Hurricane Harvey relief efforts, what he does on the field pales in comparison to the things he does off it. "At the end of my life, if I'm remembered as a good football player—and that's all I'm remembered for—then I did a poor job," he says.

Contrary to the axiom that defense wins championships, Tom Brady and the Patriots ripped the Eagles, who ranked fourth in total defense in the regular season, for more than twice their 2017 average in yards allowed in the Super Bowl. New England piled up 613 yards of total offense, including 505 yards passing by Brady alone.

THE DEFENSE RESTS

If defense really wins championships, why were each of the top five defenses in the league last year so leaky and downright horrible in the postseason, highlighted by the Super Bowl's offensive showcase?

BY GERRY DULAC | *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

What's happened to defense in the National Football League, especially at what's supposed to be the most critical point of the season?

After a regular season in which no team averaged at least 30 points a game for the first time since 2008 and games were being decried for being too boring, defenses took a siesta and disappeared quicker than David Blaine in the postseason.

In the biggest game of the year, the Philadelphia Eagles (538) and New England Patriots (613) combined for a Super Bowl-record 1,151 offensive yards and 74 points. What's more, the teams produced nine plays of at least 25 yards, making for an exciting game but uncovering the porous defensive performances that had been on display the entire postseason.

"I don't think it will ever be one versus the other," Steelers general manager Kevin Colbert says. "A team may have two great offenses in the Super Bowl but I do not think there is any one way to do it. It depends on who the good players are. (If) you've got great players on the defense, then the defense maybe has to be the group that wins it. But I don't think there is any one formula that you have to

have—a great defense to win a Super Bowl or a great offense to win a Super Bowl."

The Steelers, who ranked fifth in total defense during the regular season, were embarrassed after allowing 45 points in a divisional-round playoff loss to the Jacksonville Jaguars, and understandably so. That was the most points allowed in any of the 11 playoff games last season. The 42 points the Steelers scored against the Jaguars were second most.

But the Pittsburgh defense, which allowed the Jags 378 yards of offense, including 164 rushing yards, wasn't nearly as bad as the defensive performance of most of the other teams who made it past the wild-card round of the postseason. And that includes three of the top four-ranked defenses in the league.

The Eagles, who ranked fourth in total defense during the regular season, allowed the most yards in one game—618 to the Patriots, including 505 passing yards by Tom Brady.

The 538 total yards and 41 points allowed by New England was the most in any playoff game under its longtime coach, Bill Belichick.

The Jaguars, who ranked second in the league in total defense but No. 1 against the pass, allowed the third most in the

victory against the Steelers—545 yards, including 469 yards and five touchdowns credited to Ben Roethlisberger.

The Minnesota Vikings, who led the league in total defense, allowing an average of 275.9 yards per game, gave up 456 yards and 38 points in their blowout loss to the Eagles in the NFC Championship Game. They also allowed four plays of at least 25 yards.

So, with all this evidence, can we surmise the old adage that defense wins championships doesn't apply anymore in the NFL?

"Defense is still going to win for you," says Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz. "You need to get stops. But you also know you're usually going up against a pretty darn good quarterback. Every stop is magnified. Sometimes it's when you get the stops that is important."

In the past two postseasons, 16 teams have combined to score 30 or more points in a game—12 of them coming once the divisional round began. That is the most in back-to-back seasons since 16 teams also combined to score 30 or more points in the 2009 and 2010 postseasons.

In the previous three seasons combined (2013-15), only 13 teams scored at least 30 points in a playoff game—eight coming after the wild-card round.

"It varies year to year to me," Colbert says. "I don't try to get that systematic or detailed on it. Let's get as many good players as we can. Let's put them together in a formable way to maybe win a game and that is what we do."

The Denver Broncos won the Super Bowl three years ago with a defense that ranked No. 1 in the league in total yards and passing yards allowed and

The Vikings gave up 456 yards and 38 points in their blowout loss to the Eagles in the NFC Championship Game.

"EVERY STOP IS MAGNIFIED. SOMETIMES IT'S **WHEN** YOU GET THE STOPS THAT IS IMPORTANT."

— Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz

an offense that scored only 67 points in three postseason games. The Broncos have remained one of the better defenses in the league since their Super Bowl win—they haven't ranked lower than

fourth—but they haven't been back to the postseason since quarterback Peyton Manning retired. They signed free-agent QB Case Keenum from the Vikings in March to improve their chances.

"Defense has been our base the last four or five years and what we kind of built around," Broncos general manager John Elway says. "I'm not saying that is changing, but we definitely have to get better on the offensive side."

Last postseason also proved that superior quarterback play is the key to winning, whether it was Tom Brady in New England, Nick Foles in Philadelphia or Keenum in Minnesota.

"I don't think it's absolutely necessary (to have a franchise quarterback)," says San Francisco 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan. "I think it's necessary if you want to win consistently. If you don't have that franchise quarterback, you better have one of the best defenses in NFL history, along with a very good running game. There's other ways to do it, but it makes it a lot harder."

Of course, there's always the example of the Patriots, who won their fifth Super Bowl in 2016 with a defense that allowed the fewest points in the league and an offense that ranked third in points scored. Last season, they made it back to the Super Bowl with a defense that ranked 29th overall in the league, thanks to another MVP season by Brady.

"I think, in general, what you'd like to do is go into a game with the mindset that you can be balanced, whether it's offensively or defensively, in a situation where you can do both," says new Detroit Lions coach Matt Patricia, who was the Patriots' defensive coordinator the last six seasons. "If you can do both, then you probably have control of the game and you're probably going to be in a pretty good situation to win."

Leonard Fournette and the Jaguars gashed the Pittsburgh defense for 164 rushing yards in their AFC divisional-round matchup.

Iowa defensive back Josh Jackson runs the 40-yard dash at the 2018 NFL Scouting Combine in Indianapolis.
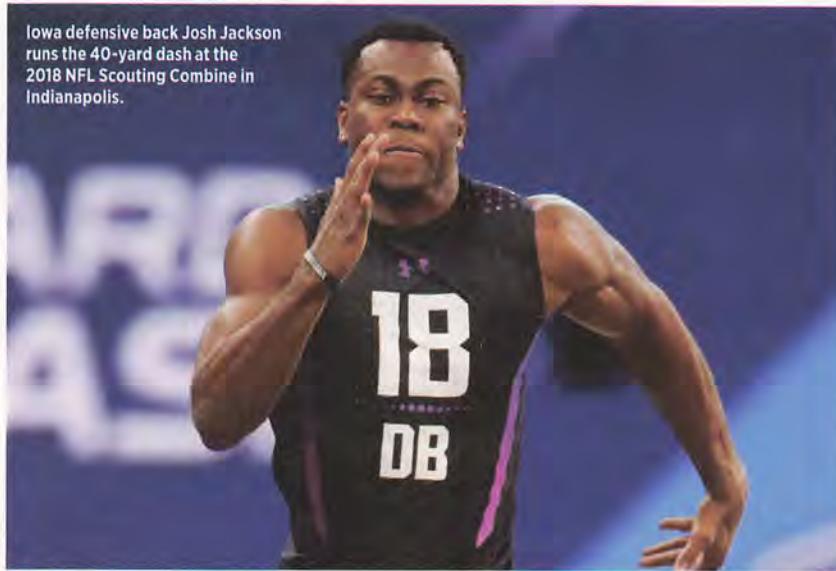
WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?

How have the best and the worst at February's annual NFL Combine performed in the pros? Looking at all the results from this century, there are some obvious trends and more than a few surprises.

BY SETH TRACHTMAN | *Street & Smith's contributor*

NFL team executives, coaches and scouts convened in Indianapolis at the NFL Combine in late February for a week of weigh-ins, measurements, interviews, sprints, jumps and bench-press reps. There's a yearly debate about how much this week really matters for draft stock and, in turn, future NFL careers.

That debate will continue, but setting records at the combine can certainly open some eyes. But what does setting records in those drills really mean? Here's a look at the top 10 overall combine performers for each drill from 2000-17, and how they performed as NFL players.

40-YARD DASH

The top 10 sprinters include six wide receivers, three cornerbacks and one running back.

Former University of Washington receiver John Ross set the 40 record in the 2017 combine with a time of 4.22 seconds before going ninth overall to the Cincinnati Bengals. His rookie season could be described as nothing short of a disaster, but it's still far too soon to draw a final conclusion on his career. Ross appeared in three games last season, touching the ball only once on offense, while struggling through knee and shoulder injuries.

The best career performers of the top 10 are clearly running back Chris Johnson (4.24), a former 2,000-yard rusher with the Titans, and 10-year NFL wideout Donte' Stallworth (4.22). Wide receiver Dri Archer (4.26) and cornerbacks Jalen Myrick (4.28) and DeMarcus Van Dyke (4.28) have done almost nothing in the NFL, and the remaining

names—cornerback Stanford Routt (4.27) and wide receivers Marquise Goodwin (4.27), J.J. Nelson (4.28) and Jacoby Ford (4.28)—had mixed NFL results or are still developing.

VERTICAL JUMP

The top 10 vertical jumpers include four cornerbacks, three safeties, two wide receivers and one linebacker.

Safety Gerald Sensabaugh has put together a quality NFL career since setting the vertical jump record in 2005 (46 inches), a mark that still stands today. He had a solid eight-year career playing for the Jaguars and Cowboys.

Despite the second-highest vertical jump ever, outside linebacker Cameron Wake (45.5 inches) went undrafted in 2005 and failed to make the Giants as a free agent. He went on to play in the Canadian Football League, but has put together a borderline Hall-of-Fame career as a pass rusher for the Miami Dolphins with five Pro Bowls and 92 sacks in nine seasons. Even at age 36, Wake is still going strong, having compiled 10.5 sacks last season.

Wide receiver Chris Chambers (45 inches) made one Pro Bowl in his 10-year career after being drafted in 2001. Wideout Chris Conley (45), defensive back Byron Jones (44.5) and safeties Obi Melifonwu (44) and Marcus Williams (43.5) are still developing into strong NFL performers, while we saw almost nothing from the pro careers of cornerbacks Chris McKenzie (45) and Donald Washington (45).

BENCH PRESS

It's hardly shocking that the elite bench-press performers were almost all interior linemen. The top 10 includes six defensive tackles, three offensive guards and one defensive end.

Former Oregon State defensive tackle Stephen Paea set the bench-press record with 49 reps in 2011 before going in the second round to the Bears. He continues to have a strong NFL career, with 14 sacks over seven seasons.

Elsewhere, defensive tackles Brodrick Bunkley (44), Dontari Poe (44) and Isaac Sopoaga (42) and guard Russell Bodine (42) have been superb NFL performers, while defensive tackles Leif Larsen (45) and Jeff Owens (44), guards Mitch Petrus (45) and Scott Young (43) and defensive end Mike Kudla (45) did little, if anything, in the league. None of the five in that

↘ THE ALL-TIME TOP 10
NFL DRAFT COMBINE RECORDS

▶ 40-YARD DASH

PLAYER NAME	SCHOOL	TIME	RD. DRAFTED/ TEAM	YEARS IN NFL
John Ross	Washington	4.22	1/CIN	1 (active)
Donte' Stallworth	Tennessee	4.22	1/NO	10
Chris Johnson	East Carolina	4.24	1/TEN	10 (active)
Dri Archer	Kent State	4.26	3/PIT	2
Marquise Goodwin	Texas	4.27	3/BUF	5 (active)
Stanford Routt	Houston	4.27	2/OAK	8
J.J. Nelson	UAB	4.28	5/ARI	3 (active)
Jacoby Ford	Clemson	4.28	4/OAK	4
DeMarcus Van Dyke	Miami (FL)	4.28	3/OAK	4
Jalen Myrick	Minnesota	4.28	7/JAC	1 (active)

▶ VERTICAL JUMP

PLAYER NAME	SCHOOL	HEIGHT	RD. DRAFTED/ TEAM	YEARS IN NFL
Gerald Sensabaugh	North Carolina	46.0	5/JAC	8
Cameron Wake	Penn State	45.5	undrafted	9 (active)
Chris Conley	Georgia	45.0	3/KC	3 (active)
Chris McKenzie	Arizona State	45.0	undrafted	1
Chris Chambers	Wisconsin	45.0	2/MIA	10
Donald Washington	Ohio State	45.0	4/KC	3
Byron Jones	Connecticut	44.5	1/DAL	3 (active)
A.J. Jefferson	Fresno State	44.0	undrafted	4
Obi Melifonwu	Connecticut	44.0	2/OAK	1 (active)
Marcus Williams	Utah	43.5	2/NO	1 (active)

▶ BENCH PRESS

PLAYER NAME	SCHOOL	REPS	RD. DRAFTED/ TEAM	YEARS IN NFL
Stephen Paea	Oregon State	49	2/CHI	7 (active)
Mitch Petrus	Arkansas	45	5/NYG	3
Mike Kudla	Ohio State	45	undrafted	0
Leif Larsen	UTEP	45	6/BUF	2
Dontari Poe	Memphis	44	1/KC	6 (active)
Jeff Owens	Georgia	44	7/PHI	1
Brodrick Bunkley	Florida State	44	1/PHI	9
Scott Young	BYU	43	5/PHI	3
Russell Bodine	North Carolina	42	4/CIN	4 (active)
Isaac Sopoaga	Hawaii	42	4/SF	9

▶ BROAD JUMP

PLAYER NAME	SCHOOL	DISTANCE	RD. DRAFTED/ TEAM	YEARS IN NFL
Byron Jones	Connecticut	12-3	1/DAL	3 (active)
Obi Melifonwu	Connecticut	11-9	2/OAK	1 (active)
Chris Conley	Georgia	11-7	3/KC	3 (active)
Jamie Collins	Southern Miss	11-7	2/NE	5 (active)
Bud Dupree	Kentucky	11-6	1/PIT	3 (active)
Justin Fargas	USC	11-5	3/OAK	7
Scott Starks	Wisconsin	11-5	3/JAC	5
Justin Hunter	Tennessee	11-5	2/TEN	5 (active)
Terence Newman	Kansas State	11-5	1/DAL	15 (active)
Chris McKenzie	Arizona State	11-4	undrafted	1

▶ THREE-CONE DRILL

PLAYER NAME	SCHOOL	TIME	RD. DRAFTED/ TEAM	YEARS IN NFL
Sedrick Curry	Texas A&M	6.34	undrafted	0
Jeff Maehl	Oregon	6.42	undrafted	4
Buster Skrine	Chattanooga	6.44	5/CLE	7 (active)
Scott Long	Louisville	6.45	undrafted	0
Dane Sanzenbacher	Ohio State	6.46	undrafted	4
Daniel Sorensen	BYU	6.47	undrafted	4 (active)
Rogers Beckett	Marshall	6.48	2/SD	5
Carlos Rogers	Auburn	6.48	1/WAS	10
Terrence Toliver	Michigan State	6.48	undrafted	0
Devon Cajuste	Stanford	6.49	undrafted	0

▶ SHUTTLE RUN

PLAYER NAME	SCHOOL	TIME	RD. DRAFTED/ TEAM	YEARS IN NFL
Kevin Kasper	Iowa	3.73	6/DEN	6
Dunta Robinson	South Carolina	3.75	1/HOU	10
Deion Branch	Louisville	3.78	2/NE	11
Justin Beriault	Ball State	3.80	6/DAL	0
Brandin Cooks	Oregon State	3.81	1/NO	4 (active)
Jason Allen	Tennessee	3.81	1/MIA	7
Bobby McCain	Memphis	3.82	5/MIA	3 (active)
Dante Hall	Texas A&M	3.82	5/KC	9
Carlos Rogers	Auburn	3.82	1/WAS	10
Kevin Bentley	Northwestern	3.83	4/CLE	10

group were drafted in the first three rounds.

BROAD JUMP

The top broad jumpers feature a variety of positions. They include four cornerbacks, two wide receivers, one running back, one defensive end, one linebacker and one safety.

Leading jumper Byron Jones was taken 27th overall in the 2015 draft by the Cowboys, and has established himself as a solid pro since then, starting all 16 games at free safety for the Cowboys in each of the last two seasons. He set the record by a wide margin in 2015, establishing a world record of 12 feet and 3 inches, and also ranks among the top 10 in the vertical jump.

Other very strong pros who prospered in the broad jump include cornerback Terence Newman (11 feet, 5 inches), linebacker Jamie Collins (11-7), running back Justin Fargas (11-5), defensive end Bud Dupree (11-6) and wide receiver Chris Conley (11-7). Another top-10 finisher in the vertical, 2017 second-round safety Obi Melifonwu (11-9), is establishing himself, while the NFL careers of cornerbacks Scott Starks (11-5) and Chris McKenzie (11-4) and wideout Justin Hunter (11-4) have been decidedly nondescript.

THREE-CONE DRILL

The three-cone drill is a measure of agility and quickness so, not surprisingly, the top performers have all been wide receivers or defensive backs, with five wideouts, three corners and two safeties landing the top 10 times since 2000.

Relative unknown cornerback Sedrick Curry (6.34 seconds) of Texas A&M owned the best time until Oklahoma corner Jordan

Thomas ran a 6.28 this year. Curry went undrafted and played in the XFL and CFL after a tryout for the Steelers.

Notables within the top 10 three-cone times include cornerbacks Buster Skrine (6.44) and Carlos Rogers (6.48) and safeties Rogers Beckett (6.48) and Daniel Sorensen (6.47). Wide receivers Jeff Maehl (6.42), Scott Long (6.45), Dane Sanzenbacher (6.46), Terrence Toliver (6.48) and Devon Cajuste (6.49) each went undrafted and failed to make notable NFL contributions.

SHUTTLE RUN

The 20-yard shuttle measures speed and quickness and, much like the three-cone drill, the top 10 times since 2000 are almost all wide receivers and defensive backs. The top finishers include four wideouts, three safeties, two cornerbacks and one linebacker.

Iowa wide receiver Kevin Kasper went in the sixth round to the Broncos in 2001 after running a staggering 3.73-second shuttle time, but had a relatively brief NFL career, playing only 39 games as primarily a kick returner over six seasons. He spent time on the rosters of nine different teams or practice squads.

The top 10 results are also sprinkled with some very solid NFL careers, including cornerbacks Dunta Robinson (3.75), Bobby McCain (3.82) and Carlos Rogers (3.82); wide receivers Deion Branch (3.78) and Brandin Cooks (3.81); safety Jason Allen (3.81), return specialist Dante Hall (3.82) and linebacker Kevin Bentley (3.83). Along with Kasper, only safety Justin Beriault (3.80) of Ball State failed to make a significant NFL contribution among the top 10 times over the last 18 years.

Then-UConn defensive back Byron Jones set the all-time record in the broad jump with a leap of 12-3 at the 2015 combine.

LeGarrette Blount was part of a three-headed backfield in Philadelphia that produced 1,495 rushing yards on the way to a Super Bowl title.

SPREADING THE WEALTH

Last season, only four NFL running backs averaged more than 20 attempts per game. Running backs are still valuable, but the days of using just one—or even two—are over.

BY MICHAEL BRADLEY | *Street & Smith's contributor*

In 2002, Duce Staley rushed for 1,029 yards and carried the ball 269 times for the Philadelphia Eagles. He was the big load in the Eagles' backfield, and it no doubt felt good for him to log the third 1,000-yard performance in six seasons playing the bellcow role in the City of Brotherly Love.

A year later in 2003, that workhorse job disappeared as the Birds went for a three-man backfield rotation that featured second-year men Brian Westbrook and Correll Buckhalter. Staley went from "main man" to the team's third-leading ballcarrier. Philly reached the NFC title game and received 1,618 rushing yards and 27 total touchdowns from that group. And Staley, whose 463 yards and 96 carries were well off his '02 production, was OK with the arrangement.

That's why he was the perfect man—as Philadelphia's running backs coach—to handle the Eagles' 2017 triple-threat backfield that included Jay Ajayi, LeGarrette Blount and Corey Clement. The trio produced 1,495 yards and helped Philadelphia win its first-ever Super Bowl title. Staley understood how to operate within the system and how to manage it.

"Having gone through it myself, having a little history with it, I've seen it work," Staley told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* last year. "All three of us had a chance to play. We were productive. We won a lot of games that way. There's no reason this can't work."

Around the NFL, more teams are adopting the Eagles' approach to distributing the backfield duties, and that is signaling the end of the workhorse runner. Last year, just four NFL backs averaged more than 20 carries a game, and only nine others attempted to run more than 15. One of those nine, Dalvin Cook, played only four games for the Vikings, while another, Adrian Peterson, was on the field just six weeks with Arizona. The running game remains

Le'Veon Bell was the exception to the rule, carrying the ball 34 more times than anyone else in the league.

valuable, even in the pass-happy NFL, but teams are dividing the backfield duties among more players.

"Teams are trying to have fresh bodies in the game," says Duke Tobin, director of player personnel for the Cincinnati Bengals. "A lot of it depends on matchups. Some teams play certain backs more in some games than in others. New England does that.

"Teams with a back that's good in all areas play him as much as they can. That's Pittsburgh."

The Steelers did rely heavily on Le'Veon Bell last year, handing it to him 321 times in 15 games. That's not a gigantic workload, historically, but it was 34 carries more than anyone else in the league. Bell was the extreme exception. Teams like the Pats were much more comfortable splitting things up within each game and week-to-week.

For instance, New England started four different backs—Dion Lewis, Mike Gillislee, Rex Burkhead and James White— at least two games each, and Lewis (180

carries, 896 yards in 16 games) was the only one who received anything that could be considered steady work. Of that group, only Burkhead missed appreciable time due to injury. New England head coach Bill Belichick and offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels sized up the opponent and used the man they thought best suited for that week's job.

It's not an easy life for those talented rushers who want to be involved full time in the offense. But in today's NFL, it's a way of life.

Last year, the Bengals used Joe Mixon and Giovani Bernard according to situation and scheme. Mixon ran it more (178 carries to 105), but Bernard was more involved in the passing game (60 targets to 34). Each filled a role, but neither was a full-time player.

"We prefer to keep both guys involved," Tobin says. "Both are very good, and both have different skillsets. (Mixon) is good between the tackles, and (Bernard) is good in the passing scheme. Either one could be a lead back."

Part of the reason for the more egalitarian approach to the backfield is the increased specialization of the game. If there can be defensive linemen whose only role is to rush the passer—or linebackers who specialize in stopping the run, dime corners and slot receivers— there can be backs who excel at certain parts of the game. It's rare teams are fortunate enough to find one guy who can do it all, so they play to their personnel's strengths.

And since colleges favor spread attacks so much these days and use run-pass options frequently, it's hard to find or project backs who will be capable of doing everything. As a result, there are going to be some rushers who want the ball more.

"Everybody's happy when they win," Tobin says. "I think we've got grown men and mature people who understand the situation. I don't know if their happiness is high on the priority list."

That's nothing new.

Just ask Staley.

TELEVISED PRESEASON GAMES

DATE	MATCHUP	TIME/TV
Thursday, Aug. 2	**Hall of Fame Game (Canton, Ohio)** Baltimore vs. Chicago	8 PM, NBC
Thursday, Aug. 16	New York Jets vs. Washington	8 PM, ESPN
Monday, Aug. 20	Baltimore vs. Indianapolis	8 PM, ESPN
Thursday, Aug. 23	Cleveland vs. Philadelphia	8 PM, FOX
Friday, Aug. 24	Detroit vs. Tampa Bay	8 PM, CBS
Saturday, Aug. 25	L.A. Chargers vs. New Orleans	8 PM, CBS
Sunday, Aug. 26	Buffalo vs. Cincinnati	4 PM, FOX
Sunday, Aug. 26	Arizona vs. Dallas	8 PM, NBC

CBS   ESPN   FOX   NBC

WEEK 1

THURSDAY, SEPT. 6	
Atlanta at Philadelphia	8:20
SUNDAY, SEPT. 9	
Buffalo at Baltimore	1:00
Jacksonville at New York Giants	1:00
Tampa Bay at New Orleans	1:00
Houston at New England	1:00
San Francisco at Minnesota	1:00
Tennessee at Miami	1:00
Cincinnati at Indianapolis	1:00
Pittsburgh at Cleveland	1:00
Kansas City at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Seattle at Denver	4:25
Dallas at Carolina	4:25
Washington at Arizona	4:25
Chicago at Green Bay	8:20
MONDAY, SEPT. 10	
New York Jets at Detroit	7:10
L.A. Rams at Oakland	10:20

WEEK 2

THURSDAY, SEPT. 13	
Baltimore at Cincinnati	8:20
SUNDAY, SEPT. 16	
Carolina at Atlanta	1:00
Indianapolis at Washington	1:00
Houston at Tennessee	1:00
Philadelphia at Tampa Bay	1:00
Kansas City at Pittsburgh	1:00
Miami at New York Jets	1:00
L.A. Chargers at Buffalo	1:00
Minnesota at Green Bay	1:00
Cleveland at New Orleans	1:00
Detroit at San Francisco	4:05
Arizona at L.A. Rams	4:05
New England at Jacksonville	4:25
Oakland at Denver	4:25
New York Giants at Dallas	8:20
MONDAY, SEPT. 17	
Seattle at Chicago	8:15

WEEK 3

THURSDAY, SEPT. 20	
New York Jets at Cleveland	8:20
SUNDAY, SEPT. 23	
New Orleans at Atlanta	1:00
Green Bay at Washington	1:00
Indianapolis at Philadelphia	1:00
Buffalo at Minnesota	1:00
Oakland at Miami	1:00
Denver at Baltimore	1:00
Cincinnati at Carolina	1:00
New York Giants at Houston	1:00
Tennessee at Jacksonville	1:00
San Francisco at Kansas City	1:00
L.A. Chargers at L.A. Rams	4:05
Dallas at Seattle	4:25
Chicago at Arizona	4:25
New England at Detroit	8:20
MONDAY, SEPT. 24	
Pittsburgh at Tampa Bay	8:15

WEEK 9

THURSDAY, NOV. 1	
Oakland at San Francisco	8:20
SUNDAY, NOV. 4	
Chicago at Buffalo	1:00
Tampa Bay at Carolina	1:00
Kansas City at Cleveland	1:00
New York Jets at Miami	1:00
Pittsburgh at Baltimore	1:00
Detroit at Minnesota	1:00
Atlanta at Washington	1:00
Houston at Denver	4:05
L.A. Chargers at Seattle	4:05
L.A. Rams at New Orleans	4:25
Green Bay at New England	8:20
MONDAY, NOV. 5	
Tennessee at Dallas	8:15

Open date: *Arizona, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, New York Giants, Philadelphia*

WEEK 10

THURSDAY, NOV. 8	
Carolina at Pittsburgh	8:20
SUNDAY, NOV. 11	
New Orleans at Cincinnati	1:00
Atlanta at Cleveland	1:00
Miami at Green Bay	1:00
Jacksonville at Indianapolis	1:00
Detroit at Chicago	1:00
Arizona at Kansas City	1:00
New England at Tennessee	1:00
Washington at Tampa Bay	1:00
Buffalo at New York Jets	1:00
L.A. Chargers at Oakland	4:05
Seattle at L.A. Rams	4:25
Dallas at Philadelphia	8:20
MONDAY, NOV. 12	
New York Giants at San Francisco	8:15

Open date: *Baltimore, Denver, Houston, Minnesota*

WEEK 11

THURSDAY, NOV. 15	
Green Bay at Seattle	8:20
SUNDAY, NOV. 18	
Cincinnati at Baltimore	1:00
Minnesota at Chicago	1:00
Carolina at Detroit	1:00
Tennessee at Indianapolis	1:00
Dallas at Atlanta	1:00
Tampa Bay at New York Giants	1:00
Philadelphia at New Orleans	1:00
Houston at Washington	1:00
Denver at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Oakland at Arizona	4:05
Pittsburgh at Jacksonville	8:20
MONDAY, NOV. 19	
Kansas City vs. L.A. Rams*	8:15

*At Mexico City

Open date: *Buffalo, Cleveland, Miami, New England, New York Jets, San Francisco*

WEEK 12

THURSDAY, NOV. 22	
Chicago at Detroit	12:30
Washington at Dallas	4:30
Atlanta at New Orleans	8:20
SUNDAY, NOV. 25	
Cleveland at Cincinnati	1:00
Seattle at Carolina	1:00
Jacksonville at Buffalo	1:00
Oakland at Baltimore	1:00
Miami at Indianapolis	1:00
San Francisco at Tampa Bay	1:00
New York Giants at Philadelphia	1:00
New England at New York Jets	1:00
Arizona at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Pittsburgh at Denver	4:25
Green Bay at Minnesota	8:20
MONDAY, NOV. 26	
Tennessee at Houston	8:15

Open date: *Kansas City, L.A. Rams*

WEEK 13

THURSDAY, NOV. 29	
New Orleans at Dallas	8:20
SUNDAY, DEC. 2	
Baltimore at Atlanta	1:00
Carolina at Tampa Bay	1:00
L.A. Chargers at Pittsburgh	1:00
Chicago at New York Giants	1:00
Buffalo at Miami	1:00
Denver at Cincinnati	1:00
L.A. Rams at Detroit	1:00
Arizona at Green Bay	1:00
Cleveland at Houston	1:00
Indianapolis at Jacksonville	1:00
New York Jets at Tennessee	4:05
Kansas City at Oakland	4:05
Minnesota at New England	4:25
San Francisco at Seattle	8:20
MONDAY, DEC. 3	
Washington at Philadelphia	8:15

WEEK 4

THURSDAY, SEPT. 27	
Minnesota at L.A. Rams	8:20
SUNDAY, SEPT. 30	
New York Jets at Jacksonville	1:00
Miami at New England	1:00
Philadelphia at Tennessee	1:00
Houston at Indianapolis	1:00
Buffalo at Green Bay	1:00
Detroit at Dallas	1:00
Tampa Bay at Chicago	1:00
Cincinnati at Atlanta	1:00
Seattle at Arizona	4:05
Cleveland at Oakland	4:05
New Orleans at New York Giants	4:25
San Francisco at L.A. Chargers	4:25
Baltimore at Pittsburgh	8:20
MONDAY, OCT. 1	
Kansas City at Denver	8:15

Open date: Carolina, Washington

WEEK 5

THURSDAY, OCT. 4	
Indianapolis at New England	8:20
SUNDAY, OCT. 7	
Tennessee at Buffalo	1:00
Atlanta at Pittsburgh	1:00
Denver at New York Jets	1:00
Jacksonville at Kansas City	1:00
Green Bay at Detroit	1:00
Baltimore at Cleveland	1:00
New York Giants at Carolina	1:00
Miami at Cincinnati	1:00
Oakland at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Arizona at San Francisco	4:25
Minnesota at Philadelphia	4:25
L.A. Rams at Seattle	4:25
Dallas at Houston	8:20
MONDAY, OCT. 8	
Washington at New Orleans	8:15

Open date: Chicago, Tampa Bay

WEEK 6

THURSDAY, OCT. 11	
Philadelphia at New York Giants	8:20
SUNDAY, OCT. 14	
Tampa Bay at Atlanta	1:00
Carolina at Washington	1:00
Seattle vs. Oakland*	1:00
Indianapolis at New York Jets	1:00
Arizona at Minnesota	1:00
Pittsburgh at Cincinnati	1:00
L.A. Chargers at Cleveland	1:00
Buffalo at Houston	1:00
Chicago at Miami	1:00
L.A. Rams at Denver	4:05
Baltimore at Tennessee	4:25
Jacksonville at Dallas	4:25
Kansas City at New England	8:20
MONDAY, OCT. 15	
San Francisco at Green Bay	8:15

*At London

Open date: Detroit, New Orleans

WEEK 7

THURSDAY, OCT. 18	
Denver at Arizona	8:20
SUNDAY, OCT. 21	
Tennessee vs. L.A. Chargers*	9:30
Cincinnati at Kansas City	1:00
Cleveland at Tampa Bay	1:00
Carolina at Philadelphia	1:00
Minnesota at New York Jets	1:00
Detroit at Miami	1:00
New England at Chicago	1:00
Buffalo at Indianapolis	1:00
Houston at Jacksonville	1:00
New Orleans at Baltimore	4:05
Dallas at Washington	4:25
L.A. Rams at San Francisco	8:20
MONDAY, OCT. 22	
New York Giants at Atlanta	8:15

*At London

Open date: Green Bay, Oakland, Pittsburgh, Seattle

WEEK 8

THURSDAY, OCT. 25	
Miami at Houston	8:20
SUNDAY, OCT. 28	
Philadelphia vs. Jacksonville*	9:30
Denver at Kansas City	1:00
Cleveland at Pittsburgh	1:00
Washington at New York Giants	1:00
Seattle at Detroit	1:00
Tampa Bay at Cincinnati	1:00
New York Jets at Chicago	1:00
Baltimore at Carolina	1:00
Indianapolis at Oakland	4:05
San Francisco at Arizona	4:25
Green Bay at L.A. Rams	4:25
New Orleans at Minnesota	8:20
MONDAY, OCT. 29	
New England at Buffalo	8:15

*At London

Open date: Atlanta, Dallas, L.A. Chargers, Tennessee

WEEK 14

THURSDAY, DEC. 6	
Jacksonville at Tennessee	8:20
SUNDAY, DEC. 9	
New York Jets at Buffalo	1:00
New York Giants at Washington	1:00
New Orleans at Tampa Bay	1:00
New England at Miami	1:00
Baltimore at Kansas City	1:00
Indianapolis at Houston	1:00
L.A. Rams at Chicago	1:00
Carolina at Cleveland	1:00
Atlanta at Green Bay	1:00
Denver at San Francisco	4:05
Cincinnati at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Philadelphia at Dallas	4:25
Detroit at Arizona	4:25
Pittsburgh at Oakland	8:20
MONDAY, DEC. 10	
Minnesota at Seattle	8:15

WEEK 15

THURSDAY, DEC. 13	
L.A. Chargers at Kansas City	8:20
SATURDAY, DEC. 15	
Cleveland at Denver	TBD
Houston at New York Jets	TBD
SUNDAY, DEC. 16	
Green Bay at Chicago	1:00
Detroit at Buffalo	1:00
Tampa Bay at Baltimore	1:00
Arizona at Atlanta	1:00
Oakland at Cincinnati	1:00
Tennessee at New York Giants	1:00
Miami at Minnesota	1:00
Washington at Jacksonville	1:00
Dallas at Indianapolis	1:00
Seattle at San Francisco	4:05
New England at Pittsburgh	4:25
Philadelphia at L.A. Rams	8:20
MONDAY, DEC. 17	
New Orleans at Carolina	8:15

WEEK 16

SUNDAY, DEC. 23	
New York Giants at Indianapolis	TBD*
Jacksonville at Miami	TBD*
Washington at Tennessee	TBD*
Baltimore at L.A. Chargers	TBD*
Houston at Philadelphia	1:00
Green Bay at New York Jets	1:00
Cincinnati at Cleveland	1:00
Tampa Bay at Dallas	1:00
Minnesota at Detroit	1:00
Buffalo at New England	1:00
Atlanta at Carolina	1:00
Chicago at San Francisco	4:05
L.A. Rams at Arizona	4:05
Pittsburgh at New Orleans	4:25
Kansas City at Seattle	8:20
MONDAY, DEC. 24	
Denver at Oakland	8:15

Game may be flexed to Saturday, Dec. 22

WEEK 17

SUNDAY, DEC. 30	
Cleveland at Baltimore	1:00
Miami at Buffalo	1:00
Philadelphia at Washington	1:00
Indianapolis at Tennessee	1:00
Detroit at Green Bay	1:00
Jacksonville at Houston	1:00
Oakland at Kansas City	1:00
Chicago at Minnesota	1:00
New York Jets at New England	1:00
Carolina at New Orleans	1:00
Dallas at New York Giants	1:00
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh	1:00
Atlanta at Tampa Bay	1:00
L.A. Chargers at Denver	4:25
San Francisco at L.A. Rams	4:25
Arizona at Seattle	4:25

POSTSEASON GAMES

➘ WILD-CARD GAMES
Sat.-Sun., Jan. 5-6, 2019

➘ DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS
Sat.-Sun., Jan. 12-13, 2019

➘ CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Sunday, Jan. 20, 2019

➘ SUPER BOWL LIII
Mercedes-Benz Stadium
Atlanta
Sunday, Feb. 3, 2019

NFL

2018 PREDICTIONS →

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR	**DEFENSIVE PLAYER** OF THE YEAR	**OFFENSIVE ROOKIE** OF THE YEAR	**DEFENSIVE ROOKIE** OF THE YEAR	**COACH** OF THE YEAR
Carson Wentz	**Aaron Donald**	**Saquon Barkley**	**Bradley Chubb**	**Sean McVay**
Philadelphia	L.A. Rams	N.Y. Giants	Denver	L.A. Rams

↘ CONFERENCE **PREDICTIONS**

AFC

EAST
1. New England
2. Buffalo
3. New York Jets
4. Miami

NORTH
1. Pittsburgh
2. Cincinnati
3. Baltimore
4. Cleveland

SOUTH
1. Jacksonville
2. Tennessee*
3. Houston
4. Indianapolis

WEST
1. L.A. Chargers
2. Kansas City*
3. Oakland
4. Denver

NFC

EAST
1. Philadelphia
2. Dallas
3. New York Giants
4. Washington

NORTH
1. Minnesota
2. Detroit
3. Green Bay
4. Chicago

SOUTH
1. New Orleans
2. Atlanta*
3. Carolina
4. Tampa Bay

WEST
1. L.A. Rams
2. San Francisco*
3. Seattle
4. Arizona

*Indicates Wild Card

↘AFC

WILD-CARD GAMES

LOS ANGELES **CHARGERS** OVER TENNESSEE **TITANS**

JACKSONVILLE **JAGUARS** OVER KANSAS CITY **CHIEFS**

DIVISIONAL GAMES

NEW ENGLAND **PATRIOTS** OVER LOS ANGELES **CHARGERS**

PITTSBURGH **STEELERS** OVER JACKSONVILLE **JAGUARS**

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP

PITTSBURGH **STEELERS** OVER NEW ENGLAND **PATRIOTS**

↘NFC

WILD-CARD GAMES

NEW ORLEANS **SAINTS** OVER SAN FRANCISCO **49ERS**

ATLANTA **FALCONS** OVER MINNESOTA **VIKINGS**

DIVISIONAL GAMES

PHILADELPHIA **EAGLES** OVER NEW ORLEANS **SAINTS**

LOS ANGELES **RAMS** OVER ATLANTA **FALCONS**

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP

LOS ANGELES **RAMS** OVER PHILADELPHIA **EAGLES**

SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS

LOS ANGELES **RAMS** OVER PITTSBURGH **STEELERS**
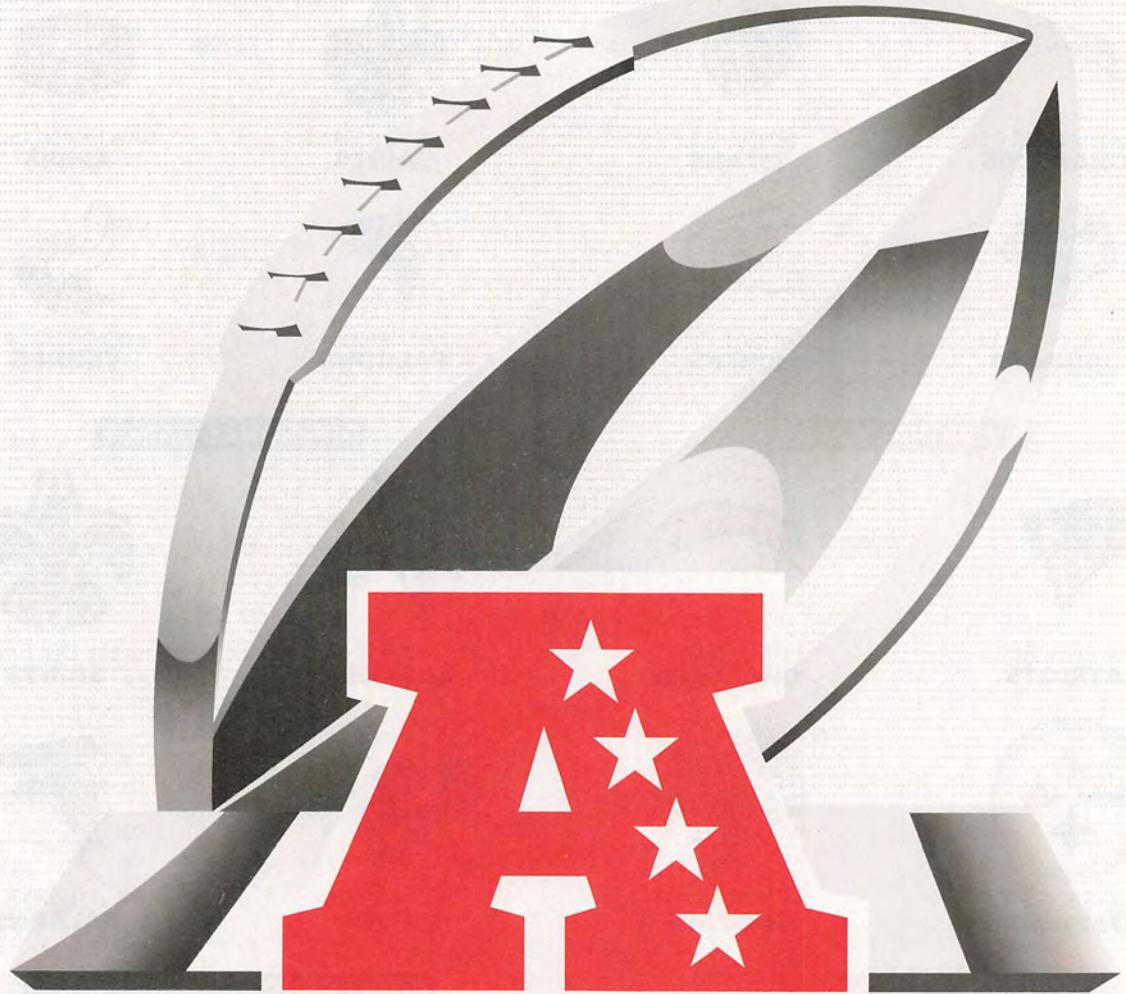
AFC OVERVIEW →

"The Last Time" for all AFC teams written by Scott Smith

Tom Brady

Ben Roethlisberger
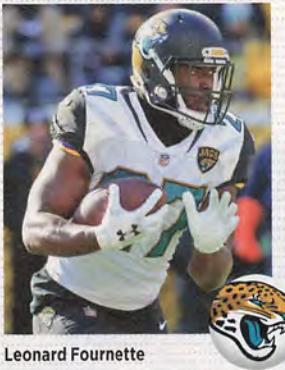
Leonard Fournette
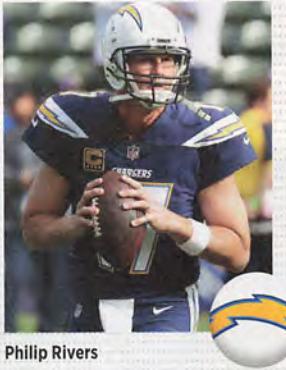
Philip Rivers

AFC EAST

1 New England Patriots
With coach Bill Belichick and quarterback Tom Brady still running the show in New England, there's no reason to think the Patriots won't contend for another Super Bowl title.

2 Buffalo Bills
With an inexperienced quarterback, subpar receivers and a largely new offensive line, it's hard to predict that the Bills will make a second consecutive playoff appearance.

3 New York Jets
The Jets will likely miss the playoffs again—they haven't made it since 2010—but laying the groundwork for future success may be the best hope for this season.

4 Miami Dolphins
It's difficult to see improvement on last season's six wins—especially with a roster that got older in free agency—as the Dolphins will look to rebuild through the draft.

AFC NORTH

1 Pittsburgh Steelers
With the return of the Killer Bs—quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, running back Le'Veon Bell and wide receiver Antonio Brown—the Steelers should have no problem winning the AFC North and making a run at the Super Bowl.

2 Cincinnati Bengals
New offensive and defensive coordinators should be enough to kick-start the franchise, but everything hinges on fixing the offensive line, which was the focus of the offseason.

3 Baltimore Ravens
Despite making some upgrades in personnel, the Ravens are an average team—until proven otherwise—in a league that thrives off of mediocrity.

4 Cleveland Browns
After going 1-31 over the last two seasons, coach Hue Jackson must make all the new parts work together to impress first-year general manager John Dorsey.

AFC SOUTH

1 Jacksonville Jaguars
All signs point to the Jaguars being a playoff team again, and the defense might allow them to become perennial AFC contenders.

2 Tennessee Titans
A solid core of young talent on both sides of the ball—and a rebound season from quarterback Marcus Mariota—give the Titans plenty of reasons to believe they can contend in the AFC South.

3 Houston Texans
Health will be a big key for Houston, but as quarterback Deshaun Watson showed last season, the Texans are capable of beating anybody anywhere as long as he's on the field.

4 Indianapolis Colts
All signs point toward Andrew Luck being ready to play this season, which should help the Colts regain relevancy in the AFC South.

AFC WEST

1 Los Angeles Chargers
Despite a relatively quiet offseason, the front office and coaching staff believe the Chargers can contend for big things with improved run defense and a solid kicking game.

2 Kansas City Chiefs
With Patrick Mahomes at quarterback, the Chiefs are set to have one of the best offenses in the NFL—and fans have a renewed hope despite being frustrated by multiple playoff disasters.

3 Oakland Raiders
The Raiders will have a decidedly different look this season as a team in full-blown transition under new coach Jon Gruden, but all the roster moves won't necessarily translate into a winning record.

4 Denver Broncos
With a much-improved offensive line, Case Keenum under center and rookie Bradley Chubb in the house, "Mile High" hopes are beginning to return to Denver.

NEW ENGLAND
PATRIOTS

Tom Brady, QB
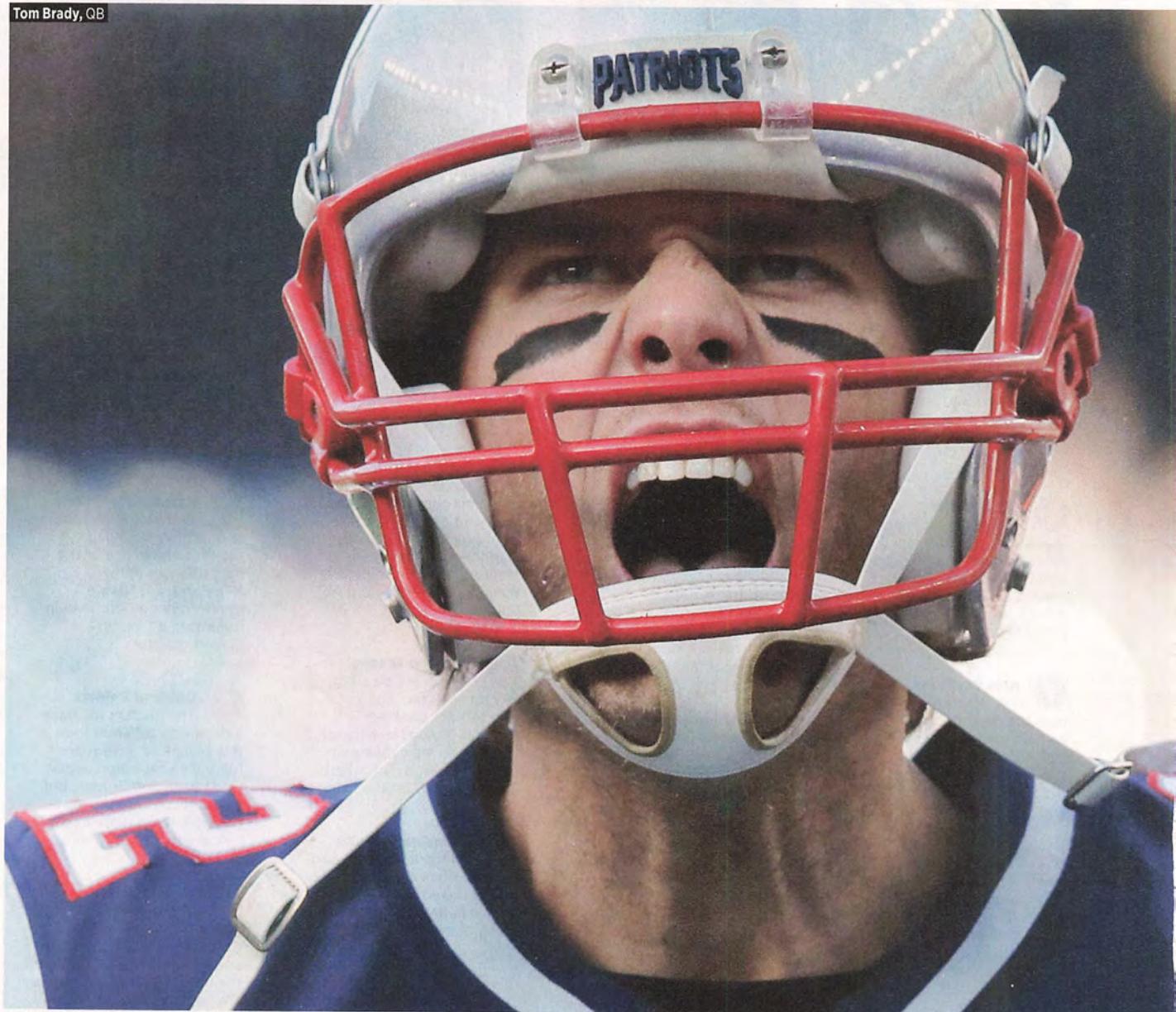
BRADY: CHARLES KRUPA / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Houston	@ Jacksonville	@ Detroit	Miami	Indianapolis	Kansas City	@ Chicago	@ Buffalo
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 23 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 4 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 14 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 29 / 8:15 PM

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Tom Brady
	Brian Hoyer
FB	James Develin
RB	Sony Michel
	James White
LT	Trent Brown
	LaAdrian Waddle
LG	Joe Thuney
	Isaiah Wynn
C	David Andrews
	Luke Bowanko
RG	Shaq Mason
	Isaiah Wynn
RT	Marcus Cannon
	Antonio Garcia
TE	Rob Gronkowski
	Dwayne Allen
WR	Julian Edelman
	Cordarrelle Patterson
WR	Chris Hogan
	Malcolm Mitchell

DEFENSE

DE	Adrian Clayborn
	Deatrich Wise
DT	Danny Shelton
	Lawrence Guy
DT	Malcom Brown
	Adam Butler
DE	Trey Flowers
	Derek Rivers
OLB	Dont'a Hightower
	Ja'Whaun Bentley
ILB	Kyle Van Noy
	Christian Sam
NB	Duke Dawson
	Jonathan Jones
CB	Stephon Gilmore
	Eric Rowe
CB	Jason McCourty
	Jonathan Jones
SS	Patrick Chung
	Jordan Richards
FS	Devin McCourty
	Duron Harmon

SPECIALISTS

LS	Joe Cardona
P	Ryan Allen
K	Stephen Gostkowski
KR	Cordarrelle Patterson
PR	Julian Edelman

Somewhat turbulent offseason has fans actually doubting Belichick. Really?

BY BEN VOLIN
Boston Globe

In Bill they trust?

Not quite as much of late for Patriots fans and players, whose faith in head coach Bill Belichick has been tested over the last couple of months. First there was the controversial benching of Malcolm Butler in the Super Bowl, then Tom Brady contemplated retirement, then Rob Gronkowski and Danny Amendola took some veiled shots at Belichick on social media. And the Patriots didn't exactly light it up in free agency, letting Nate Solder, Dion Lewis, Butler and Amendola all walk, and not spending money on any big-ticket free agent this year.

But the Patriots should still be the Patriots this year, competing for yet another Super Bowl appearance. Brady and Gronk will be back, Julian Edelman returns from a torn ACL and the defense will get a boost from the return of Dont'a Hightower. But the luster on Belichick and the "Do Your Job" mantra has lost some of its shine.

OFFENSE

Brady is back and coordinator Josh McDaniels is back, so this will be the same Patriots offense that is tantalizing to watch and frustrating for fantasy football fans. The deep ball probably won't be as big of a weapon this year with Brandin Cooks traded out of town. But Brady will continue to have all of the autonomy he needs at the line of scrimmage to get the Pats in and out of the right plays.

QUARTERBACKS: The good news is that Brady is still around, and he's not your typical quadragenarian. He became the NFL's first 40-year-old MVP last year after throwing for 4,577 yards, 32 touchdowns and eight interceptions. And it's not like Brady slowed down at the end of the season, what with his 14-point comeback in the fourth quarter of the AFC Championship Game and 505 yards and three touchdowns in the Super Bowl.

But Brady will be 41 this fall, and the Patriots don't have much behind him. Brian Hoyer has 37 career starts and is fine for a backup, but he's not the future. The Patriots traded away Jimmy Garoppolo last year at the trade deadline, and decided not to make a big play for a quarterback in this year's draft, waiting until the seventh round to draft LSU's Danny Etling. The 2018 depth chart is great as long as Brady is atop it, but the long-term issues still loom.

RUNNING BACKS: Lewis won't be easy to replace after the Patriots let him leave for Tennessee in free agency. Otherwise, it's mostly the same crew. James White will be back as a

1 PREDICTED FINISH AFC EAST

BYE: WEEK 11 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 9	**Week 10**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Green Bay	@ Tennessee	@ N.Y. Jets	Minnesota	@ Miami	@ Pittsburgh	Buffalo	N.Y. Jets
Nov. 4 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

NEW ENGLAND **PATRIOTS**

Julian Edelman, WR

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
63-17

PL	SB	PL	SB	CT

12-4	12-4	12-4	14-2	13-3
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

third-down back and is coming off a mediocre season of 56 catches for 429 yards and three touchdowns. Rex Burkhead was re-signed to a new three-year deal this offseason and, when he's healthy, he's a fantastic addition to the offense as a hard-nosed runner and shifty slot receiver. His problem is durability; Burkhead played just 195 offensive snaps last season.

Mike Gillislee is back (for now) despite a disappointing 2017 campaign in which he was a healthy scratch for almost the entire second half of the season. Brandon Bolden is back, too, but he's a special-teamer first and emergency running back second.

The big addition is first-round draft pick Sony Michel, a physical, 215-pound back from Georgia. He should be Lewis' replacement and the primary first-down back. The Patriots also signed former Bengal Jeremy Hill. He and Gillislee are probably fighting for one roster spot.

RECEIVERS: New England's biggest moves at receiver this offseason were subtractions, as they let Amendola leave for the Dolphins and traded Cooks to the Rams.

But the hope is that the return of two injured receivers can make up for the losses. Edelman will be back after tearing his ACL in the preseason last year, though he will be 32 and coming off a knee injury. Malcolm Mitchell also returns after missing all of last season with a knee injury. The third-year player was productive as a rookie.

The Patriots have some speed to replace Cooks, between Cordarrelle Patterson, who will definitely be on the team as a special-teams gunner and offensive gimmick player, and Phillip Dorsett, who will be fighting for a roster spot in camp. Edelman, Patterson and Chris Hogan are the givens for this group, while Mitchell, Dorsett, Jordan Matthews, Kenny Britt and rookie Braxton Berrios will likely be fighting for two spots.

OFFENSIVE LINE: New England's offensive line didn't look like it needed major improvements for 2018, but Belichick apparently thought differently. It was obvious that the Patriots would need a new left tackle after letting Nate Solder leave in free agency, but their first draft pick at No. 23 was on guard Isaiah Wynn, and they traded their third-rounder for 49ers right tackle Trent Brown.

Wynn started at left tackle for Georgia last season and could be the Patriots' answer there this year, though he is undersized for the position and more likely a future replacement for guard Shaq Mason, a terrific young player who

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Patriots

"You always know that you have to play your best football against the Patriots. They play disciplined football and they are very good at taking advantage of your mistakes. (Tom) Brady is the best at this. He will identify any weakness or positive matchup against the defense and key on it. He sees this faster than anyone—gets to the line and exposes those matchup problems quickly and effectively. Then you throw Gronk **(Rob Gronkowski)** in the mix, who creates his own mismatch, and the combination of the QB and tight end

affects your personnel and coverages. Teams have drafted specifically with the intent of stopping their tight end. Then you have smart wide receivers who are able to adjust within the route dependent on the defensive concept, and they are able to spread out the defense, run the ball and move the ball down the field. Defensively, they play with multiple front looks and roll coverages to confuse the offense. On paper, it will look like most teams can be competitive when you put a body on a body because there aren't many high-profile or high-salary names, but they play consistent team football and get the most out of the players that they have."

↘ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/07	L	27-42	Kansas City Chiefs
09/17	W	36-20	New Orleans Saints
09/24	W	36-33	Houston Texans
10/01	L	30-33	Carolina Panthers
10/05	W	19-14	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
10/15	W	24-17	New York Jets
10/22	W	23-7	Atlanta Falcons
10/29	W	21-13	Los Angeles Chargers
11/12	W	41-16	Denver Broncos
11/19	W	33-8	Oakland Raiders
11/26	W	35-17	Miami Dolphins
12/03	W	23-3	Buffalo Bills
12/11	L	20-27	Miami Dolphins
12/17	W	27-24	Pittsburgh Steelers
12/24	W	37-16	Buffalo Bills
12/31	W	26-6	New York Jets

2017 RECORD: 13-3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Lewis	180	896	5.0	44	6
Gillislee	104	383	3.7	16	5
Burkhead	64	264	4.1	31	5
White	43	171	4.0	10	0
Brady	25	28	1.1	7	0
Bolden	13	67	5.2	20	0
Cooks	9	40	4.4	13	0
Hoyer	4	-3	-0.8	0	0
Hogan	3	17	5.7	13	0
Ebner	1	14	14.0	14	0
Dorsett	1	7	7.0	7	0
Hollister	1	5	5.0	5	0
NEW ENGLAND	448	1,889	4.2	44	16
OPPONENTS	390	1,836	4.7	87t	6

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Gronkowski	69	1,084	15.7	53t	8
Cooks	65	1,082	16.6	64t	7
Amendola	61	659	10.8	27	2
White	56	429	7.7	27	3
Hogan	34	439	12.9	47t	5
Lewis	32	214	6.7	20	3
Burkhead	30	254	8.5	23	3
Dorsett	12	194	16.2	39	0
Allen	10	86	8.6	22	1
Bennett	6	53	8.8	27	0
Develin	6	38	6.3	10	0
Hollister	4	42	10.5	19	0
Britt	2	23	11.5	16	0
Gillislee	1	15	15.0	15	0
Bolden	1	7	7.0	7	0
NEW ENGLAND	389	4,619	11.9	64t	32
OPPONENTS	367	4,319	11.8	78t	24

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Brady	581	385	4,577	32	8
Hoyer	6	4	42	0	0
NEW ENGLAND	587	389	4,418	32	8
OPPONENTS	590	367	4,020	24	12

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Lewis	23	570	24.8	103t	1
McCourty	2	15	7.5	12	0
Burkhead	1	17	17.0	17	0
Amendola	1	16	16.0	16	0
Chung	1	4	4.0	4	0
NEW ENGLAND	28	622	22.2	103t	1
OPPONENTS	58	1,095	18.9	34	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Amendola	27	231	8.6	40	0
Reedy	4	32	8.0	13	0
Chung	1	0	0.0	0	0
NEW ENGLAND	32	263	8.2	40	0
OPPONENTS	23	105	4.6	16	0

SACKS	NEW ENGLAND 42.0, OPPONENTS 35.0

T. Flowers 6.5, Van Noy 5.5, Wise 5.0, M. Flowers 3.5, Lee 3.5, Brown 2.5, A. Butler 2.0, Harrison 2.0, Hightower 2.0, Roberts 2.0, Harris 1.5, M. Butler 1.0, Guy 1.0, Jones 1.0, Marsh 1.0, McCourty 1.0

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	394.2	1
Rushing	118.1	10
Passing	276.1	2
Scoring	28.6	3
Punt returns	8.2	18
Kick returns	22.2	12
Red zone TD%	62.7	3
Total defense	366.0	29
Against rush	114.8	20
Against pass	251.2	30
Points allowed	18.5	5
Interceptions	12	18t
Sacks	42.0	7t
Turnover diff.	+6	11

is set to make a mint in 2019 free agency. Brown could also be the Patriots' answer at left tackle, but he has only played on the right side in his career. Current right tackle Marcus Cannon could be switched over to the left side, or he could become trade bait.

The Patriots also added a bunch of veteran backup tackles in free agency: LaAdrian Waddle, Luke Bowanko, Matt Tobin and Ulrick John. And they have last year's third-round pick, tackle Antonio Garcia, coming back from an illness. To sum it up, the Pats are just going to put the best five players out there and figure out the positions later.

DEFENSE

Last year's coordinator, Matt Patricia, left for the Lions' head-coaching job, and linebackers coach Brian Flores will take over as the coordinator of the Patriots' defense, though he may not necessarily have the official title. But the Patriots will still be multiple on defense, mixing up their attack from week to week and relying on their "Big Nickel" package to stop the run with only five or six defenders in the box.

DEFENSIVE LINE: The Patriots' defensive line was hurt by injuries last year, and it showed up in the Super Bowl when they couldn't lay a finger on Eagles QB Nick Foles. They still don't have an elite pass rusher, but they do have a lot of big, physical, versatile bodies who can defend the run and keep quarterbacks contained in the pocket.

The big addition here is end Adrian Clayborn, who had 9.5 sacks for the Falcons last year (6.0 in one game). New England also added stout tackle Danny Shelton to replace Alan Branch, who was released. End Trey Flowers is a three-down player and budding young star. Malcom Brown and Lawrence Guy were the Patriots' most consistent linemen last year and were excellent against the run. Deatrich Wise, who had 5.0 sacks as a rookie, is a solid situational pass rusher.

INSIDE THE HEADSET
New England head coach Bill Belichick
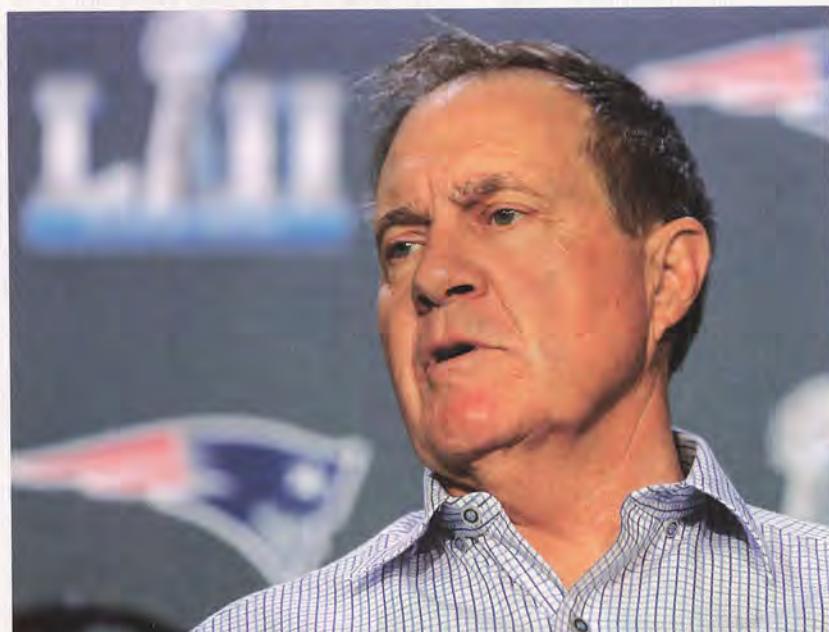
The latest incarnation of Belichick's defense emphasizes size over speed. He likes big, two-gapping defensive linemen who can defend the run in the nickel package without the aid of a seventh defender in the box. He likes big, physical cornerbacks on the outside, and big, thumping linebackers. None of this should change with the transition from Matt Patricia to Brian Flores as the defensive playcaller.

On offense, Belichick's emphasis is simple: Trust Tom Brady and Josh McDaniels. The Patriots' offense is less about calling designed plays and more about Brady reading the coverage, moving the chess pieces before the snap and finding the mismatch.

NEW ENGLAND **PATRIOTS**

Derek Rivers, last year's third-round draft pick, missed the entire season with a torn ACL.

Dont'a Hightower is also listed as a linebacker, but he's basically a defensive end at this point, strictly rushing the passer on third down.

LINEBACKERS: This is the area of the team that has the most room for improvement in 2018, as the Patriots surprisingly didn't do much to address the position in the draft or free agency.

Kyle Van Noy has taken over for Hightower as the middle linebacker and signal-caller, and he's a decent enough player, finishing with 73 tackles and 5.5 sacks in 13 games last year. Hightower, who is an edge-setting linebacker on early downs and a pass rusher on later downs, should give the pass rush a boost.

Elandon Roberts, a sixth-round pick in 2016, started 14 games last season, but he might get replaced. He's a speedy little missile on the field, but too often overruns a play, shoots the wrong gap or doesn't diagnose the play in time. The Patriots drafted Ja'Whaun Bentley in the fifth round and Christian Sam in the sixth round, so Roberts could be in trouble.

The Patriots also re-signed Marquis Flowers, a core special-teams player who ended up getting significant playing time last year and displayed good speed and decent coverage skills.

SECONDARY: This group got shredded by the Eagles in the Super Bowl, but on paper the Patriots still have a solid secondary. Stephon Gilmore is a legitimate No. 1 cornerback, with the size and length to cover elite receivers. Malcolm Butler is now gone as the No. 2 corner and, while his scrappiness and competitiveness will be missed, he certainly was inconsistent and not his usual, productive self in 2017.

The battle to replace Butler will come down to Eric Rowe, another big, rangy cornerback; Jason McCourty, acquired in a trade with the Browns; and Duke Dawson, a rookie second-rounder out of Florida.

Third-year cornerback Jonathan Jones was a nice contributor for most of the season, and was quietly missed in the Super Bowl after injuring his ankle earlier in the playoffs. Cyrus Jones, a 2016 second-round pick, tore his ACL in training camp last year and will be fighting for a roster spot.

The Patriots have three solid safeties. Devin McCourty is the leader of the defense and can play slot cornerback or center field. Patrick Chung is New England's Swiss Army Knife who plays all over the defense. Duron Harmon is usually in the right spot as the center fielder.

The 31st overall pick in this year's draft, running back **Sony Michel** averaged 7.9 yards per carry last year for Georgia. He is just what the Patriots like for their first-down back—physical, 215 pounds and doesn't dance around in the backfield. They'll give him Dion Lewis' old role and set him loose for 10-15 carries per game.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Stephen Gostkowski has an unfortunate streak of missing an extra point or chip-shot field goal in New England's AFC Championship Games and Super Bowls, but otherwise he is a terrific kicker who's still on top of his game. He was 37-of-40 on field goals last year, including making all four of his attempts from 50-plus yards, and he is a master at the high, short kickoffs that pin the opponent deeper in their own territory.

There may be a punting competition this year, with the Patriots taking a look at undrafted rookie Corey Bojorquez out of New Mexico to compete with incumbent Ryan Allen, who had a decent 2017 season and finished tied for 19th in net punting average.

Backup receiver Patterson and his five career return touchdowns will handle kickoff returns. Look for Edelman to split punt-return duties with rookie Berrios.

BOTTOM LINE

The tension behind the scenes is real, but it didn't affect the Patriots in 2017, and shouldn't do so in 2018, either. Just about the entire band is back again—Belichick, Brady, Gronkowski, McDaniels, Edelman—and everyone is still on top of their game. The offensive line is a work-in-progress and the defense may not be any better this year. But with Brady and Belichick still running the show, there's no reason to think the Patriots won't be 12-4 again and competing for another Super Bowl title.

2018 TEAM GRADE: **A-**
2018 STOCKWATCH: **BUY**

THE LAST TIME ...

Drew Bledsoe (left) and Tom Brady

... New England had a losing campaign was 2000 when Bill Belichick was in his first season as coach of the Patriots. New England finished 5-11 and last in the AFC East after starting out 0-4 behind the last quarterback to direct the Patriots' offense, Drew Bledsoe, since team icon Tom Brady took over the reins in 2001.

⇘ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **CB** Jason McCourty
  (trade, Cleveland)
- **WR** Cordarrelle Patterson
  (trade, Oakland)
- **DE** Adrian Clayborn
  (free agent, Atlanta)
- **RB** Jeremy Hill
  (free agent, Cincinnati)
- **OT** Trent Brown
  (free agent, San Francisco)
- **DT** Danny Shelton
  (trade, Cleveland)

Jason McCourty

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Patriots took a couple of smart, safe picks in the first round, drafting Georgia guard/tackle **Isaiah Wynn** at No. 23 and Georgia running back Sony Michel at No. 31. They maybe didn't fit the team's biggest needs, but both should make the transition to the NFL and be instant contributors this year. New England entered Day Two with three picks, but only used one, taking Florida cornerback Duke Dawson. They traded one second-rounder to Chicago for a 2019 second-rounder, and traded a third-rounder to San Francisco for offensive tackle Trent Brown. The Patriots went 87 spots between picks, then drafted six players in the last three rounds, targeting backup linebackers and special-teams players.

2018 DRAFT GRADE: B
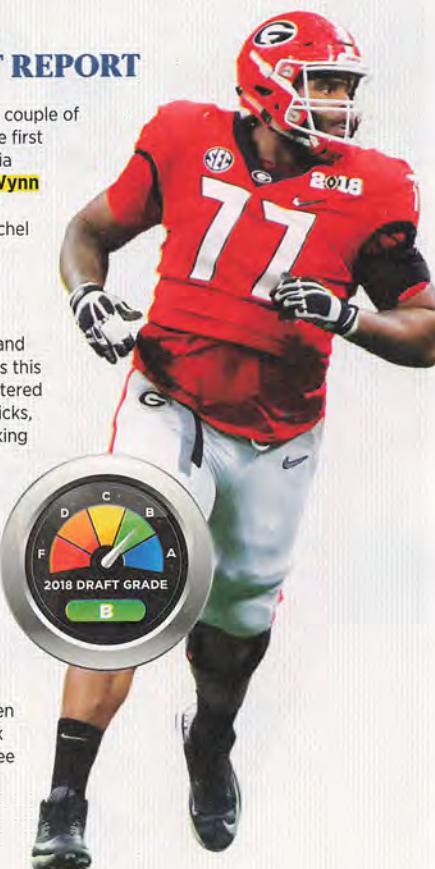
⇘ THE PATRIOTS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	23	Isaiah Wynn	OL	6-2	302	22	Georgia
1	31	Sony Michel	RB	5-11	215	23	Georgia
2	56	Duke Dawson	CB	5-10	202	22	Florida
5	143	Ja'Whaun Bentley	LB	6-2	260	22	Purdue
6	178	Christian Sam	LB	6-2	244	22	Arizona State
6	210	Braxton Berrios	WR	5-9	183	22	Miami (Fla.)
7	219	Danny Etling	QB	6-3	222	24	LSU
7	243	Keion Crossen	DB	5-10	180	22	Western Carolina
7	250	Ryan Izzo	TE	6-5	256	22	Florida State

⇘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Bill Belichick, **Head Coach/Defensive Coordinator;** Josh McDaniels, **Offensive Coordinator;** Joe Judge, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS

			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
12	Brady, Tom	QB	6-4	225	41	19	Michigan
2	Hoyer, Brian	QB	6-2	215	32	10	Michigan State

OFFENSIVE LINE

			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
60	Andrews, David	C	6-3	295	26	4	Georgia
	Bowanko, Luke	OL	6-6	300	27	5	Virginia
	Brown, Trent	OL	6-8	355	25	4	Florida
61	Cannon, Marcus	OL	6-6	335	30	8	TCU
74	Croston, Cole	OL	6-5	315	24	2	Iowa
64	Ferentz, James	OL	6-2	285	29	3	Iowa
63	Garcia, Antonio	OL	6-7	302	24	2	Troy
76	Jelks, Andrew	OL	6-6	307	24	1	Vanderbilt
	John, Ulrick	OL	6-5	309	26	5	Georgia State
75	Karras, Ted	OL	6-4	305	25	3	Illinois
72	King, Jason	OL	6-4	310	24	1	Purdue
69	Mason, Shaq	OL	6-1	310	25	4	Georgia Tech
62	Thuney, Joe	OL	6-5	305	25	3	N.C. State
	Tobin, Matt	T	6-6	303	28	6	Iowa
68	Waddle, LaAdrian	OL	6-6	315	27	6	Texas Tech

RUNNING BACKS

			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
38	Bolden, Brandon	RB	5-11	220	28	7	Ole Miss
34	Burkhead, Rex	RB	5-10	210	28	6	Nebraska
46	Develin, James	FB	6-3	255	30	6	Brown
35	Gillislee, Mike	RB	5-11	219	27	6	Florida
	Hill, Jeremy	RB	6-1	230	25	5	LSU
28	White, James	RB	5-10	205	26	5	Wisconsin

RECEIVERS

			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
83	Allen, Dwayne	TE	6-3	265	28	7	Clemson
85	Britt, Kenny	WR	6-3	223	29	10	Rutgers
13	Dorsett, Phillip	WR	5-10	185	25	4	Miami (Fla.)
11	Edelman, Julian	WR	5-10	200	32	10	Kent State
87	Gronkowski, Rob	TE	6-6	265	29	9	Arizona
15	Hogan, Chris	WR	6-1	210	30	6	Monmouth
81	Hollister, Cody	WR	6-4	209	24	1	Arkansas
47	Hollister, Jacob	TE	6-4	239	24	2	Wyoming
	Matthews, Jordan	WR	6-3	212	26	5	Vanderbilt
84	McCarron, Riley	WR	5-9	185	25	1	Iowa
19	Mitchell, Malcolm	WR	6-1	200	26	3	Georgia
	Niklas, Troy	TE	6-6	270	25	5	Notre Dame
	Patterson, Cordarrelle	WR	6-2	220	27	6	Tennessee
18	Slater, Matthew	WR	6-0	205	33	11	UCLA
82	Tye, Will	TE	6-2	256	26	3	Stony Brook

DEFENSIVE LINE

			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
90	Brown, Malcom	DL	6-2	320	24	4	Texas
70	Butler, Adam	DL	6-5	300	24	2	Vanderbilt
	Clayborn, Adrian	DE	6-3	280	30	8	Iowa
42	Davis, Keionta	DL	6-4	260	24	1	Chattanooga
98	Flowers, Trey	DL	6-2	265	25	4	Arkansas
96	Grissom, Geneo	DL	6-4	265	26	4	Oklahoma
93	Guy, Lawrence	DL	6-4	305	28	8	Arizona State
55	Lee, Eric	DL	6-3	260	24	2	South Florida
95	Rivers, Derek	DE	6-5	250	24	1	Youngstown State
	Shelton, Danny	DL	6-2	335	25	4	Washington
99	Valentine, Vincent	DT	6-3	320	24	3	Nebraska
91	Wise, Deatrich	DL	6-5	271	24	2	Arkansas

LINEBACKERS

			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
59	Flowers, Marquis	LB	6-3	250	26	5	Arizona
50	Grigsby, Nicholas	LB	6-2	230	26	3	Pittsburgh
54	Hightower, Dont'a	LB	6-3	265	28	7	Alabama
48	Langi, Harvey	LB	6-2	252	25	2	BYU
52	Roberts, Elandon	LB	6-0	235	24	3	Houston
53	Van Noy, Kyle	LB	6-3	243	27	5	BYU

DEFENSIVE BACKS

			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
23	Chung, Patrick	S	5-11	215	31	10	Oregon
43	Ebner, Nate	DB	6-0	220	29	7	Ohio State
24	Gilmore, Stephon	CB	6-1	190	27	7	South Carolina
30	Harmon, Duron	DB	6-1	205	27	6	Rutgers
41	Jones, Cyrus	CB	5-10	200	24	3	Alabama
26	Jones, David	DB	6-3	210	24	1	Richmond
31	Jones, Jonathan	DB	5-10	190	24	3	Auburn
36	King, Brandon	DB	6-2	220	25	4	Auburn
27	Lewis, Ryan	CB	6-0	200	24	1	Pittsburgh
32	McCourty, Devin	DB	5-10	195	31	9	Rutgers
	McCourty, Jason	DB	5-11	195	31	10	Rutgers
37	Richards, Jordan	DB	5-11	210	25	4	Stanford
25	Rowe, Eric	DB	6-1	205	25	4	Utah
39	Travis, Damarius	DB	6-2	215	24	1	Minnesota
22	Wiltz, Jomal	CB	5-10	180	23	1	Iowa State

SPECIALISTS

			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
6	Allen, Ryan	P	6-2	220	28	6	Louisiana Tech
49	Cardona, Joe	LS	6-3	245	26	4	Navy
3	Gostkowski, Stephen	K	6-1	215	34	13	Memphis

BUFFALO
BILLS

LeSean McCoy, RB

MCCOY: ADRIAN KRAUS / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
@ Baltimore	L.A. Chargers	@ Minnesota	@ Green Bay	Tennessee	@ Houston	@ Indianapolis	New England
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 29 / 8:15 PM

2017 RECORD   **OVERALL:** 9-7 **HOME:** 6-2
CONFERENCE: 7-5 **DIVISION:** 3-3

HEAD COACH   **SEAN MCDERMOTT** (SECOND YEAR, 9-7)
CAREER RECORD: 9-7

▶ **ONLINE:** www.buffalobills.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @buffalobills
▶ **TICKETS:** 877-BB-TICKS
▶ **STADIUM:** New Era Field
▶ **CAPACITY:** 71,608
▶ **TURF:** A-Turf Titan

AFC EAST

Could it be that Bills are in a rebuild already a year after ending playoff drought?

BY JAY SKURSKI
Buffalo News

2
PREDICTED FINISH **AFC EAST**

A rebuilding playoff team? That's a fair description of the 2018 Buffalo Bills. The end of an embarrassing 17-year postseason drought was a pleasant surprise in the first year of the Brandon Beane/Sean McDermott Era. The team's general manager and head coach would be the first to say that the team is still not where it needs to be.

"We have to turn the page from what happened last year and understand that this is a new team," McDermott says. "It's a new year, new personalities, so we've got our work cut out for us. We've got a long way to go–that really hasn't changed."

Beane and McDermott have continued to turn over the roster assembled by former GM Doug Whaley. The Bills are taking their medicine with a massive amount of dead money on the salary cap, an indication they might be looking more at contending in 2019.

OFFENSE

It's a homecoming for new offensive coordinator Brian Daboll, who went to St. Francis High School just a few miles from the Bills' practice facility. Daboll has served as offensive coordinator in Kansas City, Cleveland and Miami with mediocre results. However, his experience on Bill Belichick's staff at New England, as well as winning the 2017 national championship as offensive coordinator at Alabama, has fans hoping he can turn around a feeble passing attack. Expect a quick-strike, precision scheme similar to what the Patriots run.

QUARTERBACKS: Tyrod Taylor was shipped off to Cleveland for a third-round draft pick, leaving no obvious starter on Buffalo's roster. First-round draft pick Josh Allen will compete for the job, but he needs plenty of seasoning, so ideally he can start his career on the bench, giving him time to learn. That means it will be a competition between AJ McCarron and Nathan Peterman for the starting role. McCarron signed a modest two-year contract after four seasons with the Bengals. The Bills were his last available starting option in free agency, and the deal he signed is more in line with backup money. Peterman, meanwhile, is best remembered for a disastrous start last year as a rookie, when he threw five interceptions in the first half against the Chargers. That's not a competition that will inspire many fans, who will be calling for Allen early at the first sign of trouble for whoever starts.

RUNNING BACKS: It's going to be the LeSean McCoy Show again in 2018.

BYE: WEEK 11   Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 9	**Week 10**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Chicago	@ N.Y. Jets	Jacksonville	@ Miami	N.Y. Jets	Detroit	@ New England	Miami
Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

BUFFALO **BILLS**

Micah Hyde, S

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
39-41

PL

6-10	9-7	8-8	7-9	9-7
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

The seemingly ageless veteran ran for 1,138 yards in 2017, making the Pro Bowl for his third straight year in Buffalo. Far too often, McCoy was the Bills' only real offensive threat and, even at age 30, that could be true again in 2018 given the uncertainty at quarterback and wide receiver. McCoy will also be expected to take on a bigger leadership role now that Taylor is gone. He's taken big steps in that regard the past couple years. The Bills signed Chris Ivory to provide the thunder to McCoy's lightning. Ivory is a downhill runner who should provide an upgrade over Mike Tolbert as the No. 2 running back. Travaris Cadet, who gave the Bills

some good snaps as a backup to McCoy at times last season before getting hurt, will compete for the No. 3 job with Taiwan Jones.

RECEIVERS: This may be the weakest positional group on the roster. Kelvin Benjamin was acquired from Carolina at the trade deadline last season, but got hurt in his second game with the team and never really became the No. 1 target he was penciled in as. He's fully recovered from minor knee surgery and is entering a contract year, so he should be highly motivated to produce. Behind him, No. 2 wide receiver Zay Jones struggled as a rookie in 2017, but more
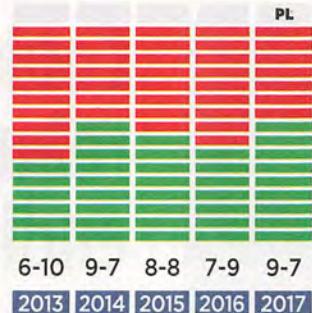
troubling is the bizarre situation that led to him being arrested, while naked, at an apartment complex in Los Angeles. Although prosecutors declined to press charges, the circumstances surrounding the incident bring into question Jones' stability moving forward. It's hard to say what kind of contributor he'll be in 2018, or even if he'll be back on the field at all. Veteran Jeremy Kerley was signed to be the slot receiver.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The Bills have gone through massive changes up front, some of their own doing and some brought on unexpectedly. Starting center Eric Wood was forced into retirement

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Bills

"Their offense still goes through Shady (running back LeSean McCoy). He didn't have a lot of help last year. (General manager) Brandon (Beane) is high on Kelvin Benjamin, but I don't see it. He can't get any separation. They need to add some more receivers. They did a nice job getting **Dion Dawkins** last year in the second round—he's going to be a good one. I don't think losing (center Eric) Wood is as big of a loss as people are saying. The guy they have behind him (Ryan Groy) can play.

"I was a little surprised they let their Mike (middle linebacker Preston Brown) go. He's not a Pro Bowler, but they don't have anyone better behind him. … I love their secondary. (Tre'Davious) White, (Micah) Hyde and (Jordan) Poyer are all great. They overpaid for (Star) Lotulelei, but he should help them up front. They couldn't stop the run last year."

⬊ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	21-12	New York Jets
09/17	L	3-9	Carolina Panthers
09/24	W	26-16	Denver Broncos
10/01	W	23-17	Atlanta Falcons
10/08	L	16-20	Cincinnati Bengals
10/22	W	30-27	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
10/29	W	34-14	Oakland Raiders
11/02	L	21-34	New York Jets
11/12	L	10-47	New Orleans Saints
11/19	L	24-54	Los Angeles Chargers
11/26	W	16-10	Kansas City Chiefs
12/03	L	13-23	New England Patriots
12/10	W	13-7	Indianapolis Colts
12/17	W	24-16	Miami Dolphins
12/24	L	16-37	New England Patriots
12/31	W	22-16	Miami Dolphins

2017 RECORD: 9-7

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
McCoy	287	1,138	4.0	48t	6
Taylor	84	427	5.1	32	4
Tolbert	66	247	3.7	25	1
Cadet	22	93	4.2	12	0
Webb	8	54	6.8	22	0
Murphy	7	41	5.9	25	0
Peterman	7	23	3.3	9	0
DiMarco	2	-2	-1.0	0	0
Thompson	2	-5	-2.5	0	0
Williams	1	1	1.0	1t	1
K. Clay	1	0	0.0	0	0
BUFFALO	487	2,017	4.1	48t	12
OPPONENTS	466	1,994	4.3	51	22

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
McCoy	59	448	7.6	39	2
C. Clay	49	558	11.4	44	2
Thompson	27	430	15.9	46	1
Z. Jones	27	316	11.7	33	2
Matthews	25	282	11.3	47	1
O'Leary	22	322	14.6	32	2
Benjamin	16	217	13.6	35	1
Tolbert	14	78	5.6	12	0
Holmes	13	120	9.2	36	3
Cadet	13	93	7.2	16	0
Thomas	7	67	9.6	22t	1
DiMarco	7	28	4.0	9	0
Tate	6	81	13.5	24	1
Murphy	2	7	3.5	5	0
K. Clay	1	28	28.0	28	0
T. Jones	1	11	11.0	11	0
BUFFALO	289	3,086	10.7	47	16
OPPONENTS	370	3,844	10.4	77t	14

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Taylor	420	263	2,799	14	4
Peterman	49	24	252	2	5
Webb	7	2	35	0	1
BUFFALO	476	289	2,825	16	10
OPPONENTS	573	370	3,688	14	18

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Tate	28	548	19.6	29	0
T. Jones	2	50	25.0	27	0
DiMarco	1	24	24.0	24	0
Murphy	1	18	18.0	18	0
BUFFALO	32	640	20.0	29	0
OPPONENTS	31	681	22.0	61	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Tate	20	193	9.7	40	0
Hyde	2	18	9.0	12	0
K. Clay	2	2	1.0	2	0
BUFFALO	24	213	8.9	40	0
OPPONENTS	38	210	5.5	26	0

SACKS	BUFFALO 27.0, OPPONENTS 47.0

Hughes 4.0, Lawson 4.0, Alexander 3.0, Davis 3.0, Williams 3.0, Poyer 2.0, Thornton 2.0, Capi 1.0, Dareus 1.0, Humber 1.0, Washington 1.0, Yarbrough 1.0

⬊ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	302.6	29
Rushing	126.1	6
Passing	176.6	31
Scoring	18.9	22
Punt returns	8.9	12
Kick returns	20.0	24
Red zone TD%	51.1	22
Total defense	355.1	26
Against rush	124.6	29
Against pass	230.5	20
Points allowed	22.4	18
Interceptions	18	6t
Sacks	27.0	29t
Turnover diff.	+9	7

by a neck injury, left tackle Cordy Glenn was traded to the Bengals and left guard Richie Incognito was placed on the reserve/retired list after going on a Twitter rampage that included firing his agent, announcing his retirement and then asking for his release. Dion Dawkins will step into the starting role in place of Glenn, while Ryan Groy and Russell Bodine, who was signed away from Cincinnati, will compete for the starting center job. The Bills could also elect to play Groy in Incognito's spot. Veterans Vladimir Ducasse (guard) and Jordan Mills (tackle) are back on the right side. Neither is a star, but they gave the Bills decent play in 2017. Marshall Newhouse was signed from the Raiders to be the swing tackle.

DEFENSE

The Bills run a 4-3 scheme that sees its cornerbacks play mostly zone coverage. Coordinator Leslie Frazier oversees it, with help from McDermott. The Bills rely heavily on a rotation up front and depend on the middle linebacker to handle the playcalls. The scheme is not heavy on blitzes, depending instead on generating four-man pressure. The key is an opportunistic defense that emphasizes takeaways, of which the Bills had 25 last year.

DEFENSIVE LINE: The trade of Marcell Dareus last October left the Bills weak in the middle, particularly against the run. Former first-round draft pick Star Lotulelei, who is familiar with McDermott's defense after playing for him at Carolina, was signed to fix that. The Bills also brought back veteran Kyle Williams, the heart and soul of the team, for a 13th season. Defensive end Shaq Lawson enters a make-or-break year. The 2016 first-round pick has been largely invisible the first two seasons while dealing with injuries. The team's top pass rusher, Jerry Hughes, had

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Buffalo head coach Sean McDermott

McDermott is old-school through and through. Therefore, it's not a surprise he tends to be more conservative. He ranked 22nd on the "Aggressiveness Index" put out by Football Outsiders, which measures how often a coach goes for it on fourth-and-one or fourth-and-two, factoring in the rate when those situations happen between the opponent's 31- to 39-yard lines. McDermott also challenged just four calls in 2017, successfully getting one of them overturned. Only four teams made fewer challenges than the Bills. McDermott also made a controversial quarterback change in the middle of a playoff race. That move blew up in his face, but he was able to keep the team together despite it.

BUFFALO **BILLS**

just 4.0 sacks last season, the lowest total of his five years with the team. With the size of his contract, Hughes is a candidate to be a surprise cut in training camp. To add more spice to the pass rush, the team signed former Redskins edge rusher Trent Murphy, who is coming off a torn ACL.

LINEBACKERS: It's rare that a 20-year-old serves as the quarterback of a defense, but it looks like that's what will be asked of Tremaine Edmunds in 2018. The second of Buffalo's two first-round draft picks, Edmunds comes from a football family—his dad, Ferrell, played tight end for the Dolphins, while his brother, Terrell, was a first-round pick of the Steelers. Their older brother, Trey, is a running back with the Saints. Edmunds projects as an every-down linebacker early in his NFL career. Matt Milano, a pleasant surprise as a fifth-round pick last year, is the starter at weakside. He had a knack for making big plays as a rookie. Veteran Lorenzo Alexander is a team leader who figures to start at strongside, but likely won't see as much playing time as the other two starters. He's best

utilized in a specialized role as a pass rusher at this point in his career.

SECONDARY: Easily the strength of Buffalo's defense, this group is led by the dynamic safety duo of Micah Hyde and Jordan Poyer. Signed as free agents last year, Hyde and Poyer quickly formed one of the best safety tandems in the NFL. Hyde was a Pro Bowl selection after finishing with 82 tackles, 13 passes defensed and five interceptions. Poyer was snubbed for the honor after putting up 95 tackles, 13 passes defensed and five interceptions, one of which came off of Tom Brady and was returned for a touchdown. Cornerback Tre'Davious White was a candidate for Defensive Rookie of the Year and should be even better in his second season. There is one change in the starting lineup: Vontae Davis was signed in free agency and he replaces cornerback E.J. Gaines, who went to Cleveland. Davis will have to prove he's healthy after his 2017 season with the Colts was cut short by a groin injury that required surgery.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The Bills were
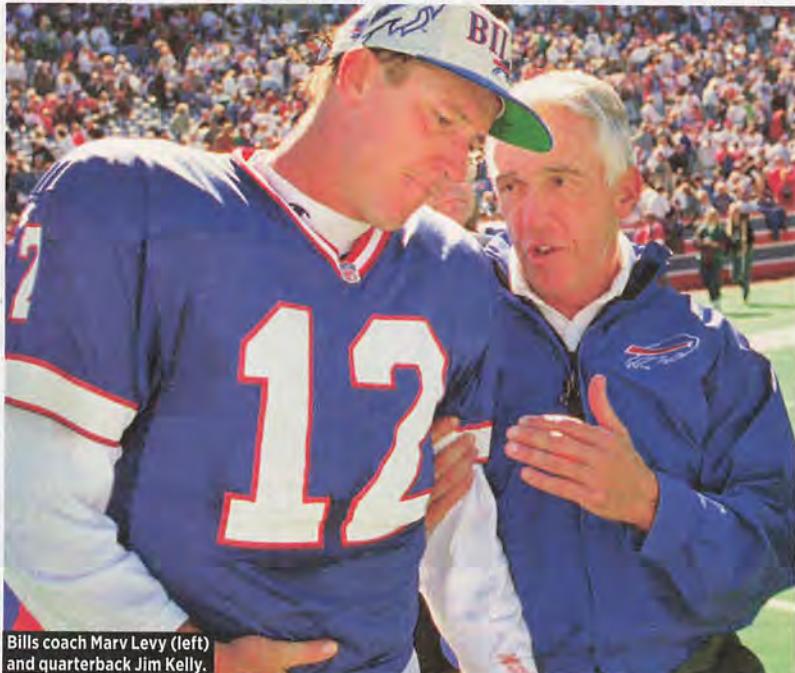
He might not jump off the stat sheet week-in and week-out. Instead, the expected impact of defensive tackle **Star Lotulelei** on the Buffalo defense will be on what he does to free up his teammates to make plays. He's going to occupy multiple blockers, which should allow those around him to get to the football, resulting in a stronger run defense.

solid in this category in 2017, finishing 10th in the NFL in the Football Outsiders' special-teams rankings. Kicker Stephen Hauschka finished 29-of-33 on field goals, adjusting well to the windy conditions in New Era Field. He was a nice find in free agency. Punter Colton Schmidt also had a solid season, averaging 40.5 net yards on 79 punts. The same goes for long snapper Reid Ferguson, who was flawless in his first year on the job. There are questions on both punt and kick returns after the Bills elected not to re-sign wide receiver Brandon Tate. Kerley had experience with both jobs when he was with the Jets, so expect him to get the first shot. The Bills could use more explosive plays in the return game. The coverage units are led by linebackers Ramon Humber and Tanner Vallejo and wide receiver Andre Holmes.

BOTTOM LINE

The Bills play five of their first seven games on the road. That's a big ask of a team that will have an inexperienced starting quarterback, largely new offensive line and subpar group of receivers. Because of those concerns, it's hard to predict a second straight playoff appearance. However, the defense should take a big step forward and, if a quarterback emerges, this is a team with a bright future. The best thing that can be said about the Bills is under Beane and McDermott, they have a plan. That hasn't always been the case.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C+
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...

Bills coach Marv Levy (left) and quarterback Jim Kelly.

... the Bills had a head coach direct the team for four consecutive full seasons was **1997 in Marv Levy's last of 12 years directing the franchise** in a run that included four AFC titles. Since Levy, Buffalo has had 10 different men in charge on the sidelines.

NEW ARRIVALS

- **QB** AJ McCarron
  (free agent, Cincinnati)
- **C** Russell Bodine
  (free agent, Cincinnati)
- **DT** Star Lotulelei
  (free agent, Carolina)
- **RB** Chris Ivory
  (free agent, Jacksonville)
- **CB** Vontae Davis
  (free agent, Indianapolis)
- **WR** Jeremy Kerley
  (free agent, N.Y. Jets)

Chris Ivory

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The success or failure of the Bills' 2018 draft class rides on the development of quarterback Josh Allen. If he turns into a franchise passer, nobody will remember that general manager Brandon Beane traded away two second-round picks to get him. Allen will get a shot to win the starting job right away, but it won't be handed to him. Tremaine Edmunds, the team's second first-round pick, will be an immediate starter at middle linebacker. At 6-5 and 250 pounds, he's a physical freak. Fourth-round cornerback Taron Johnson of Weber State is the early favorite to play nickel cornerback, while fifth-round guard Wyatt Teller of Virginia Tech could be another Day Three contributor.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
B

THE BILLS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	7	Josh Allen	QB	6-5	237	22	Wyoming
1	16	Tremaine Edmunds	LB	6-5	250	20	Virginia Tech
3	96	Harrison Phillips	DT	6-3	307	22	Stanford
4	121	Taron Johnson	CB	5-11	192	22	Weber State
5	154	Siran Neal	S	6-0	206	24	Jacksonville State
5	166	Wyatt Teller	G	6-4	314	23	Virginia Tech
6	187	Ray-Ray McCloud	WR	5-10	190	21	Clemson
7	255	Austin Proehl	WR	5-10	175	22	North Carolina

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Sean McDermott, **Head Coach;** Brian Daboll, **Offensive Coordinator;** Leslie Frazier, **Defensive Coordinator;** Danny Crossman, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
McCarron, AJ	QB	6-3	215	27	5	Alabama
2 Peterman, Nathan	QB	6-2	225	24	2	Pittsburgh

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
Bodine, Russell	C	6-3	308	26	5	North Carolina
73 Dawkins, Dion	T	6-5	320	24	2	Temple
62 Ducasse, Vladimir	G	6-5	329	30	9	Massachusetts
72 Groy, Ryan	G	6-5	320	27	5	Wisconsin
61 James, Josh	T	6-5	314	25	1	Carroll (Mont.)
68 McDermott, Conor	T	6-8	305	25	2	UCLA
76 Miller, John	G	6-3	315	25	4	Louisville
79 Mills, Jordan	T	6-5	316	27	6	Louisiana Tech
Newhouse, Marshall	T	6-4	330	29	9	TCU
60 Redmond, Adam	C	6-6	300	25	1	Harvard
74 Wesley, De'Ondre	T	6-6	331	26	3	BYU
70 Wood, Eric	C	6-4	310	32	10	Louisville

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
39 Cadet, Travaris	RB	6-1	210	29	7	Appalachian State
42 DiMarco, Patrick	FB	6-1	234	29	7	South Carolina
36 Green, Aaron	RB	5-11	206	25	1	TCU
Ivory, Chris	RB	6-0	223	30	9	Tiffin
26 Jones, Taiwan	RB	6-0	195	30	8	Eastern Washington
25 McCoy, LeSean	RB	5-11	210	30	10	Pittsburgh
45 Murphy, Marcus	RB	5-8	193	26	3	Missouri

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
13 Benjamin, Kelvin	WR	6-5	245	27	5	Florida State
19 Bray, Quan	WR	5-10	183	25	3	Auburn
85 Clay, Charles	TE	6-3	255	29	8	Tulsa
Clay, Kaelin	WR	5-10	195	26	4	Utah
80 Croom, Jason	TE	6-4	246	24	1	Tennessee
16 Dupre, Malachi	WR	6-2	196	22	1	LSU
18 Holmes, Andre	WR	6-4	210	30	7	Hillsdale
11 Jones, Zay	WR	6-2	200	23	2	East Carolina
Kerley, Jeremy	WR	5-9	188	29	8	TCU
88 Lee, Khari	TE	6-4	253	26	4	Bowie State
84 O'Leary, Nick	TE	6-3	252	26	3	Florida State
89 Reilly, Brandon	WR	6-2	200	24	1	Nebraska
Streater, Rod	WR	6-3	200	30	7	Temple
82 Thomas, Logan	TE	6-6	250	27	4	Virginia Tech
89 Towbridge, Keith	TE	6-5	262	23	1	Louisville

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
Fede, Terrence	DE	6-4	267	26	5	Marist
94 Hatley, Rickey	DT	6-4	310	24	1	Missouri
55 Hughes, Jerry	DE	6-2	254	30	9	TCU
90 Lawson, Shaq	DE	6-3	267	24	3	Clemson
97 Lewis, Marquavius	DE	6-3	270	25	1	South Carolina
Lotulelei, Star	DT	6-2	315	28	6	Utah
Murphy, Trent	DE	6-6	259	27	5	Stanford
Odighizuwa, Owa	DE	6-4	264	26	3	UCLA
Palepoi, Tenny	DT	6-1	298	27	5	Utah
92 Washington, Adolphus	DT	6-4	295	23	3	Ohio State
95 Williams, Kyle	DT	6-1	303	35	13	LSU
54 Yarbrough, Eddie	DE	6-3	259	25	2	Wyoming

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
57 Alexander, Lorenzo	LB	6-1	245	35	12	California
50 Humber, Ramon	LB	5-11	232	31	10	North Dakota State
44 Lacey, Deon	LB	6-3	235	28	2	West Alabama
58 Milano, Matt	LB	6-0	223	24	2	Boston College
Stanford, Julian	LB	6-1	230	28	6	Wagner
40 Vallejo, Tanner	LB	6-1	228	23	2	Boise State
53 Woodson-Luster, Xavier	LB	6-1	219	23	2	Arkansas State

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
41 Borders, Breon	CB	6-0	189	23	1	Duke
Bush, Rafael	S	5-11	203	31	8	South Carolina State
Davis, Vontae	CB	5-11	207	30	10	Illinois
Gaines, Phillip	DB	6-0	193	27	5	Rice
23 Hyde, Micah	S	6-0	197	27	6	Iowa
31 Marlowe, Dean	S	6-1	208	26	3	James Madison
McCray, Kelcie	S	6-2	202	29	6	Arkansas State
McCray, L.J.	DB	6-0	204	27	3	Catawba
30 Pitts, Lafayette	CB	5-11	195	25	3	Pittsburgh
21 Poyer, Jordan	S	6-0	191	27	6	Oregon State
27 White, Tre'Davious	CB	5-11	192	23	2	LSU

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
7 Carter, Cory	P	5-11	220	24	1	Texas Southern
69 Ferguson, Reid	LS	6-2	244	24	2	LSU
4 Hauschka, Stephen	K	6-4	210	33	11	N.C. State
6 Schmidt, Colton	P	5-11	224	27	5	UC Davis

NEW YORK
JETS

Sam Darnold, QB

DARNOLD: MICHAEL AINSWORTH / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
@ Detroit	Miami	@ Cleveland	@ Jacksonville	Denver	Indianapolis	Minnesota	@ Chicago
Sept. 10 / 7:10 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 20 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM

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▶ **TWITTER:** @nyjets
▶ **TICKETS:** 800-469-JETS
▶ **STADIUM:** MetLife Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 82,500
▶ **TURF:** FieldTurf

JETS
AFC EAST

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Josh McCown
	Sam Darnold
RB	Isaiah Crowell
	Bilal Powell
LT	Kelvin Beachum
	Ben Ijalana
LG	James Carpenter
	Dakota Dozier
C	Spencer Long
	Travis Swanson
RG	Brian Winters
	Ben Braden
RT	Brandon Shell
	Brent Qvale
TE	Jordan Leggett
	Clive Walford
WR	Quincy Enunwa
	ArDarius Stewart
WR	Robby Anderson
	Jalin Marshall
WR	Jermaine Kearse
	Terrelle Pryor Sr.

DEFENSE
DE	Leonard Williams
	Brandon Copeland
NT	Steve McLendon
	Deon Simon
DE	Henry Anderson
	Xavier Cooper
OLB	Lorenzo Mauldin
	Dylan Donahue
ILB	Darron Lee
	Neville Hewitt
ILB	Avery Williamson
	Kevin Minter
OLB	Jordan Jenkins
	Kevin Pierre-Louis
CB	Morris Claiborne
	Juston Burris
CB	Trumaine Johnson
	Darryl Roberts
SS	Jamal Adams
	Doug Middleton
FS	Marcus Maye
	Rontez Miles

SPECIALISTS
LS	Thomas Hennessy
P	Lachlan Edwards
K	Cairo Santos
KR	ArDarius Stewart
PR	Elijah McGuire

Jets hope not to rush rookie Darnold but McCown's injury history may preclude that

BY J.P. PELZMAN
Street & Smith's correspondent

The popular wisdom at this time in 2017 was that the Jets were headed toward an epically bad season after budget-cutting gutted the roster. Well, the Jets were surprisingly competitive, but save the congratulations. Several close defeats and the eventual loss of overachieving journeyman quarterback Josh McCown to injury resulted in a second consecutive 5-11 record.

The Jets haven't made the postseason since 2010, so it will be interesting to see whether their braintrust is more interested in ending that futility or in developing No. 3 overall draft pick Sam Darnold at quarterback. Head coach Todd Bowles, entering his fourth season, got a two-year contract extension at the end of last year, so he isn't on the hot seat. Nor is general manager Mike Maccagnan, although he certainly will be if Darnold doesn't become a franchise QB eventually.

There is enough talent to be competitive if McCown plays as well as he did last season, but is he merely keeping the seat warm for Darnold?

OFFENSE

Bowles fired coordinator John Morton after last season, his lone year with the Jets, because he felt Morton abandoned the running game too often. New coordinator Jeremy Bates was quarterbacks coach in 2017 and likely will retain much of Morton's West Coast offense, which was well-suited for McCown. But expect the Jets to run the ball more often per the conservative Bowles' preference. Bates' only previous stint as an OC was with Seattle in 2010. He was fired after that season.

QUARTERBACKS: The Jets are in a similar position to where they found themselves a year ago. Once again, the smart money says the veteran McCown, who currently tops the depth chart, is a placeholder until a much younger, highly touted player can supplant him. But neither Bryce Petty nor Christian Hackenberg could beat out McCown in 2017, and he didn't lose the job until suffering a season-ending hand injury in the 13th game. But neither Petty nor Hackenberg was a first-round draft choice, and one would think the Jets would like to get the talented Darnold in there sooner rather than later, if he can handle the job. The Jets signed former Viking Teddy Bridgewater in March, ostensibly to compete with McCown, but he has played only nine snaps since the end of the 2015 season because of a devastating non-contact knee injury. McCown (18 TD passes, 9 picks in 2017)

3
PREDICTED FINISH AFC EAST

BYE: WEEK 11 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Game time to be released by Week 8.

Week 9	**Week 10**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
@ Miami	Buffalo	New England	@ Tennessee	@ Buffalo	Houston	Green Bay	@ New England
Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 15 / TBD*	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

NEW YORK **JETS**

Bilal Powell, RB

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
32-48

8-8	4-12	10-6	5-11	5-11
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

has never started all 16 games in a season.
RUNNING BACKS: With the now-retired Matt Forte gone after two mostly disappointing seasons as a Jet, veteran Bilal Powell and Cleveland import Isaiah Crowell figure to lead the running game. Powell averaged 4.3 yards a carry in 2017 and probably should have gotten even more than the 201 touches he had, and now will have to split duties with Crowell. But the 225-pound Crowell, who rushed for 853 yards for the Browns a year ago, could provide the power element missing from the Jets' backfield since Chris Ivory left via free agency after the 2015 campaign. Sixth-round pick Elijah McGuire averaged only 3.6 yards per rush as a rookie but showed flashes of his potential and also demonstrated value as a receiver (17 catches, 10.4 yards per catch). Fullback Lawrence Thomas played 14 games with four starts and is a solid

blocker. He had eight touches, including six receptions.
RECEIVERS: Third-year pro Robby Anderson is a budding star, and likely would have had a 1,000-yard season last year had McCown not gotten hurt. Anderson has sure hands and the ability to get deep, but the mercurial wideout has also had two off-field arrests in his home state of Florida the past two years, and it's possible he could face a suspension as part of the NFL's personal-conduct policy. Veteran Jermaine Kearse (65 receptions) was obtained in a shrewd trade with Seattle and will be an asset for whoever plays quarterback. And don't forget Quincy Enunwa, who had a breakout season in 2016 before missing all of last year because of a neck injury that required surgery. With tight end Austin Seferian-Jenkins gone via free agency, candidates to fill his role include former

Oakland Raider Clive Walford (70 career receptions, 6 TDs), 2017 fifth-round pick Jordan Leggett and 2018 fourth-round selection Chris Herndon.
OFFENSIVE LINE: The Jets need major improvement from this unit after a season in which they allowed 47 sacks (tied for seventh worst in the NFL) and ranked only 20th in yards per carry. The Jets chose not to re-sign center Wesley Johnson after he followed a promising 2016 with a substandard 2017 season. Enter free-agent signee Spencer Long, who converted from guard while with the Redskins but missed nine games in 2017 because of knee and quadriceps injuries. The rest of the unit returns intact—tackle Kelvin Beachum and guard James Carpenter on the left side and tackle Brandon Shell and guard Brian Winters on the right side. Winters figures to improve upon a rough 2017 season in which he

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Jets

   "(Todd) Bowles has improved the culture from the Rex Ryan days and you can see that in how hard they competed last year. I think he was able to use all that talk about how bad they were going to be to light a fire under them. Their (coaching) staff got about as much out of Josh McCown as they possibly could, but you have to wonder if he

can be as good this season. (Robby) Anderson is the kind of gamebreaker who can scare a defense, but they have to make sure they keep his head on straight. I don't think they've seen the best out of **Leonard Williams** yet, but maybe this will be his year, especially with (Sheldon) Richardson and (Muhammad) Wilkerson out of the picture. They still look like the kind of team that will have to win close games instead of outscoring people."

Darron Lee
3.0 sacks

2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	12-21	Buffalo Bills
09/17	L	20-45	Oakland Raiders
09/24	W	20-6	Miami Dolphins
10/01	W	23-20	Jacksonville Jaguars
10/08	W	17-14	Cleveland Browns
10/15	L	17-24	New England Patriots
10/22	L	28-31	Miami Dolphins
10/29	L	20-25	Atlanta Falcons
11/02	W	34-21	Buffalo Bills
11/12	L	10-15	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
11/26	L	27-35	Carolina Panthers
12/03	W	38-31	Kansas City Chiefs
12/10	L	0-23	Denver Broncos
12/17	L	19-31	New Orleans Saints
12/24	L	7-14	Los Angeles Chargers
12/31	L	6-26	New England Patriots

2017 RECORD: 5-11

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Powell	178	772	4.3	75t	5
Forte	103	381	3.7	20	2
McGuire	88	315	3.6	69t	1
McCown	37	124	3.4	22	5
Petty	7	55	7.9	24	0
Stewart	7	27	3.9	11	0
Anderson	3	9	3.0	7	0
Thomas	2	1	0.5	1	0
Natson	1	15	15.0	15	0
Cadet	1	3	3.0	3	0
NEW YORK	427	1,702	4.0	75t	13
OPPONENTS	466	1,887	4.0	70	13

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Kearse	65	810	12.5	51	5
Anderson	63	941	14.9	69t	7
Seferian-Jenkins	50	357	7.1	28	3
Forte	37	293	7.9	34	1
Powell	23	170	7.4	31	0
Kerley	22	217	9.9	31t	1
McGuire	17	177	10.4	38	1
Hansen	9	94	10.4	24	0
Tomlinson	8	121	15.1	34	1
Sterling	6	82	13.7	35	0
Stewart	6	82	13.7	46	0
Thomas	6	43	7.2	15	0
Tye	4	38	9.5	21	0
Cadet	3	26	8.7	13	0
Natson	2	18	9.0	19	0
M. Williams	1	31	31.0	31	0
Peake	1	3	3.0	3	0
NEW YORK	323	3,501	10.8	69t	19
OPPONENTS	329	3,904	11.9	79t	30

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
McCown	397	267	2,926	18	9
Petty	112	55	544	1	3
Edwards	1	1	31	0	0
NEW YORK	510	323	3,182	19	12
OPPONENTS	558	329	3,749	30	11

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Natson	16	325	20.3	32	0
Stewart	9	173	19.2	32	0
McGuire	4	83	20.8	24	0
Raymond	3	85	28.3	40	0
Bass	1	10	10.0	10	0
Jenkins	1	7	7.0	7	0
NEW YORK	34	683	20.1	40	0
OPPONENTS	23	459	20.0	31	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Kerley	16	85	5.3	15	0
Natson	16	38	2.4	17	0
Raymond	5	38	7.6	25	0
McGuire	1	10	10.0	10	0
NEW YORK	38	171	4.5	25	0
OPPONENTS	49	491	10.0	60t	1

SACKS
NEW YORK 28.0, OPPONENTS 47.0

Davis 5.0, Bass 3.5, Wilkerson 3.5, Jenkins 3.0, Lee 3.0, Adams 2.0, L. Williams 2.0, Martin 1.5, McLendon 1.5, Cooper 1.0, Ealy 1.0, Skrine 1.0

2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	305.2	28
Rushing	106.4	19
Passing	198.9	24
Scoring	18.6	24
Punt returns	4.5	32
Kick returns	20.1	23
Red zone TD%	54.6	14t
Total defense	352.2	25
Against rush	117.9	24
Against pass	234.3	21
Points allowed	23.9	22t
Interceptions	11	20t
Sacks	28.0	28
Turnover diff.	-4	23t

played through an abdominal injury for much of the year. The Jets also hope that Carpenter can return to his pre-2017 form.

DEFENSE

Defense-minded coach Bowles and coordinator Kacy Rodgers will continue to use their base 3-4 scheme. A recurring problem for the Jets during their tenure has been a lack of sacks, as the team hasn't had an edge rusher who makes opposing offensive coordinators lose sleep since John Abraham was traded away before the 2006 draft. But at least the Jets seem set at safety for years to come with the tandem of Jamal Adams and Marcus Maye.

DEFENSIVE LINE: A formerly star-studded unit now has only one gem, end Leonard Williams, the sixth overall pick in 2015. Williams hasn't yet lived up to his vast potential, but he's getting closer to that level. A team-high 25 quarterback hits by Williams last season led to only 2.0 sacks, and it's obvious he needs to close the deal more often. He has the talent and desire to do so. Right end is up for grabs after the Jets released Muhammad Wilkerson, whose tenure with the team ended on a low note when he was benched for the last three games in 2017 for repeatedly showing up late and/or

INSIDE THE HEADSET
New York head coach Todd Bowles

Bowles certainly had the Jets both mentally prepared and emotionally motivated last season, and that helped them overachieve to some extent. But the conservative Bowles more than once has punted the ball away in the fourth quarter when time and score have dictated his only realistic chance to win was to go for it on fourth down. The Jets were outscored by a whopping 72 points in the fourth quarter and overtime last season, and although inferior talent is part of the reason, it's clear Bowles and his staff must make better in-game decisions to help rectify this problem.

NEW YORK **JETS**

missing meetings. The Jets acquired end Henry Anderson from Indianapolis on the third day of the draft. He has started 19 games in three seasons and would seem to have the inside track to start, although he'll have to fend off reserve Xavier Cooper and third-round draft pick Nathan Shepherd. Former Steeler Steve McLendon has been rock-solid at nose tackle in his two seasons with the Jets.

LINEBACKERS: Inside linebacker Demario Davis led the Jets in both tackles and sacks last season, yet the front office chose to let him walk in free agency and signed ex-Titan Avery Williamson as his replacement. Williamson, who is three years younger than Davis, had 3.0 sacks last year and was second on his team in tackles, so it's quite possible he can give the Jets similar production. Still, the loss of the fiery and charismatic Davis could leave a leadership void. Darron Lee, a 2016 first-rounder, improved against the run in his second NFL season yet still must get better in coverage. Outside linebacker Jordan Jenkins also had a better sophomore pro campaign, but 2015 third-round pick Lorenzo Mauldin has yet to make a significant impact and missed all of 2017 with a back injury. Outside linebacker is a position the Jets could look to strengthen during the summer. The Jets still don't have a productive pure pass rusher on the roster.

SECONDARY: The Jets allowed 30 passing touchdowns last season, tied for second most in the league, but that had something to do with their fifth-worst total of 28.0 sacks. More pressure from up front would help this unit, which has two potential stars in safeties Adams and Maye, taken in the first and second rounds, respectively, a year ago. Both showed plenty of promise as rookies, and Adams has the potential to be a leader. Free-agent import Morris Claiborne was an upgrade at cornerback over the faded Darrelle Revis, but 2016 fourth-round pick Juston Burris has yet to prove himself at the other corner spot, so the Jets signed former Rams standout Trumaine Johnson to a five-year, $72.5 million deal in free agency. Johnson has 18 interceptions and 67 passes defensed in his six-year NFL career. It's possible that Burris will compete with penalty-prone veteran Buster Skrine to be the nickel back.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The Jets had some problems with this unit in coordinator Brant Boyer's first season. A fumbled punt cost them dearly in a close loss to Atlanta, and strong-legged punter Lachlan Edwards (46.6-yard average, 40.5 net) sometimes outkicked his coverage, although he sharply cut down on the inopportune shanks that often

Isaiah Crowell was Cleveland's featured running back the last three seasons and proved to be a bright spot for the downtrodden franchise. His mix of power and speed figures to be vital for an offense that Todd Bowles wants to be more balanced. Last season, the Jets had 557 passing plays, including sacks, and 427 rushing attempts.

beset him as a rookie in 2016. Kicker Chandler Catanzaro left for Tampa Bay via free agency, so the Jets signed veteran Cairo Santos to take his place. Santos, a fifth-year pro who has connected on 84.1 percent of his field goals, was limited to five games with Kansas City and Chicago last season because of a recurring groin injury. There likely will be competition at the return spots. McGuire and wide receiver ArDarius Stewart both saw limited kickoff-return duty last season, but it's possible the punt returner won't be on the roster until training camp or later. Long snapper Thomas Hennessy was an upgrade from Tanner Purdum.

BOTTOM LINE

The Jets haven't made the playoffs since 2010, and that drought seems likely to continue. Yes, the roster has been upgraded, but the overall caliber of talent still lags behind New York's AFC rivals. Presumed starting quarterback McCown is injury-prone and has never played a full 16-game season. And the NFL learning curve will be steep for even a prized prospect such as Darnold, if and when he assumes the starting role. The Jets also must fix their fourth-quarter woes to have any chance of moving up. Continuing to lay groundwork for potential future success may be the best the Jets can hope to do.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Jets had the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL Draft was 1996 when they used it on dynamic USC wide receiver Keyshawn Johnson. Johnson went on to play four years with the Jets before moving on to Tampa Bay, putting together consecutive Pro Bowl seasons in 1998-99 with New York, including 80-plus catches for more than 1,100 yards both years. In 1998, the physical 6-4, 212-pounder played a huge role in getting the franchise its first playoff win since 1986, coming up with nine catches for 121 yards and a touchdown in a 34-24 victory over Jacksonville the divisional round.

NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **WR** Terrelle Pryor Sr.
  (free agent, Washington)
- **C** Spencer Long
  (free agent, Washington)
- **LB** Avery Williamson
  (free agent, Tennessee)
- **DL** Henry Anderson
  (trade, Indianapolis)
- **CB** Trumaine Johnson
  (free agent, L.A. Rams)
- **RB** Isaiah Crowell
  (free agent, Cleveland)

Terrelle Pryor Sr.

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Jets spent two second-round picks (and a 2019 second-round selection) so they could move up to No. 3 overall and pick USC quarterback **Sam Darnold**. Darnold had more-than-expected turnover problems last year in his second season as a college starter, but certainly was a make-sense pick. The 6-3 Californian has prototypical size and can make all the throws. Third-round defensive end Nathan Shepherd should compete for a starting role. Fourth-round tight end Chris Herndon has a chance to start. Sixth-round cornerback Parry Nickerson doesn't have slot-corner experience, so 2018 figures to be a learning year for him. New York still hasn't filled its crying need for a big-time edge rusher.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
B

THE JETS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	3	Sam Darnold	QB	6-3	225	21	USC
3	72	Nathan Shepherd	DL	6-4	315	24	Fort Hays State
4	107	Chris Herndon	TE	6-4	253	22	Miami (Fla.)
6	179	Parry Nickerson	CB	5-10	182	23	Tulane
6	180	Folorunso Fatukasi	DL	6-4	318	23	Connecticut
6	204	Trenton Cannon	RB	5-11	185	22	Virginia State

PRYOR SR.: REED HOFFMANN / AP; DARNOLD: MARK J. TERRILL / AP

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Todd Bowles, Head Coach; Jeremy Bates, Offensive Coordinator; Kacy Rodgers, Defensive Coordinator; Brant Boyer, Special Teams Coordinator

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
2	Bridgewater, Teddy	QB	6-2	215	25	5	Louisville
5	Hackenberg, Christian	QB	6-4	228	23	3	Penn State
15	McCown, Josh	QB	6-4	218	39	16	Sam Houston State
9	Petty, Bryce	QB	6-3	230	27	4	Baylor

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
68	Beachum, Kelvin	T	6-3	308	29	7	SMU
69	Braden, Ben	G	6-6	329	24	1	Michigan
77	Carpenter, James	G	6-5	321	29	8	Alabama
70	Dozier, Dakota	G	6-4	313	27	5	Furman
78	Harrison, Jonothan	C	6-4	300	27	5	Florida
71	Ijalana, Ben	T	6-4	322	29	8	Villanova
65	Kirven, Korren	T	6-4	315	23	1	Alabama
61	Long, Spencer	C	6-5	318	27	5	Nebraska
79	Qvale, Brent	OL	6-7	315	27	4	Nebraska
72	Shell, Brandon	T	6-5	324	26	3	South Carolina
64	Swanson, Travis	C	6-5	304	27	5	Arkansas
67	Winters, Brian	G	6-4	320	27	6	Kent State

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
	Crowell, Isaiah	RB	5-11	225	25	5	Alabama State
37	Judd, Akeem	RB	5-10	225	25	1	Ole Miss
25	McGuire, Elijah	RB	5-10	214	24	2	Louisiana
29	Powell, Bilal	RB	5-10	204	29	8	Louisville
	Rawls, Thomas	RB	5-89	215	25	4	Central Michigan
44	Thomas, Lawrence	FB	6-3	286	25	3	Michigan State

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
11	Anderson, Robby	WR	6-3	190	25	3	Temple
81	Enunwa, Quincy	WR	6-2	225	26	4	Nebraska
16	Hansen, Chad	WR	6-2	202	23	2	California
	Hodges, Bucky	TE	6-6	257	23	1	Virginia Tech
88	Johnson, Charles	WR	6-2	217	29	5	Grand Valley State
10	Kearse, Jermaine	WR	6-1	209	28	7	Washington
86	Leggett, Jordan	TE	6-5	258	23	2	Clemson
89	Marshall, Jalin	WR	5-10	200	23	2	Ohio State
7	McBride, Tre	WR	6-0	210	25	4	William & Mary
87	Natson, JoJo	WR	5-7	153	24	2	Akron
17	Peake, Charone	WR	6-2	209	25	3	Clemson
1	Pryor Sr., Terrelle	WR	6-4	228	29	6	Ohio State
14	Roberts, Andre	WR	5-11	195	30	9	The Citadel
19	Smith, Devin	WR	6-1	199	26	4	Ohio State
85	Sterling, Neal	TE	6-3	257	26	4	Monmouth
18	Stewart, ArDarius	WR	5-11	204	24	2	Alabama
84	Stringfellow, Damore'ea	WR	6-2	222	23	1	Ole Miss
83	Tomlinson, Eric	TE	6-6	263	26	3	UTEP
	Walford, Clive	TE	6-4	250	26	4	Miami (Fla.)
82	Whitehead, Lucky	WR	5-9	180	26	3	Florida Atlantic

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
96	Anderson, Henry	DL	6-6	301	27	4	Stanford
75	Cooper, Xavier	DL	6-4	300	26	4	Washington State
51	Copeland, Brandon	DL	6-3	263	27	4	Pennsylvania
99	McLendon, Steve	DL	6-3	310	32	9	Troy
91	Pelon, Claude	DL	6-4	300	25	1	USC
98	Pennel, Mike	DL	6-4	332	27	5	Colorado State-Pueblo
93	Simon, Deon	DL	6-4	332	28	2	Northwestern State
92	Williams, Leonard	DL	6-5	302	24	4	USC

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
	Awe, Micah	LB	6-0	220	24	1	Texas Tech
50	Bishop, Freddie	LB	6-3	255	28	3	Western Michigan
49	Donahue, Dylan	LB	6-3	248	26	2	West Georgia
57	Gwacham, Obum	LB	6-5	246	27	4	Oregon State
46	Hewitt, Neville	LB	6-2	234	25	4	Marshall
48	Jenkins, Jordan	LB	6-3	259	24	3	Georgia
58	Lee, Darron	LB	6-1	232	23	3	Ohio State
95	Martin, Josh	LB	6-3	245	26	6	Columbia
55	Mauldin, Lorenzo	LB	6-4	259	25	4	Louisville
53	Minter, Kevin	LB	6-0	246	27	6	LSU
	Pierre-Louis, Kevin	LB	6-0	230	26	5	Boston College
54	Williamson, Avery	LB	6-1	246	26	5	Kentucky

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
33	Adams, Jamal	S	6-1	213	22	2	LSU
23	Brooks, Terrence	S	5-11	200	26	5	Florida State
32	Burris, Juston	CB	6-0	212	25	3	N.C. State
21	Claiborne, Morris	CB	5-11	192	28	7	LSU
34	Clark, Jeremy	CB	6-3	220	24	2	Michigan
38	Coleman, Xavier	CB	5-11	190	23	2	Portland State
22	Johnson, Trumaine	CB	6-2	213	28	7	Montana
31	Jones, Derrick	CB	6-2	188	23	2	Ole Miss
37	Keeton, Bryson	CB	6-2	190	25	2	Montana State
26	Maye, Marcus	S	6-0	207	25	2	Florida
36	Middleton, Doug	S	6-0	210	24	2	Appalachian State
45	Miles, Rontez	S	6-0	203	29	4	California (Pa.)
27	Roberts, Darryl	CB	6-0	182	27	4	Marshall
36	Robinson, Rashard	CB	6-2	177	23	3	LSU
	Rodgers II, Kacy	CB	6-2	220	26	1	Miami (Fla.)
35	Sinkfield, Terrell	CB	6-1	195	27	1	Northern Iowa
41	Skrine, Buster	CB	5-9	185	29	8	Chattanooga

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4	Edwards, Lachlan	P	6-4	209	26	3	Sam Houston State
42	Hennessy, Thomas	LS	6-2	246	24	2	Duke
	Rose, Nick	K	6-2	200	24	2	Texas
8	Santos, Cairo	K	5-8	160	26	5	Tulane
	Turk, Ben	P	5-11	186	28	1	Notre Dame

MIAMI
DOLPHINS

Kenyan Drake, RB

DRAKE: ADRIAN KRAUS / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Tennessee	@ N.Y. Jets	Oakland	@ New England	@ Cincinnati	Chicago	Detroit	@ Houston
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 25 / 8:20 PM

Looks like 2018 season could turn out to be Dolphins' version of 'Groundhog Day'

BY PETE WILLIAMS
Street & Smith's correspondent

Like many a south Florida socialite, the Miami Dolphins have undergone a major cosmetic upgrade. Hard Rock Stadium, the facility's seventh corporate moniker, is unrecognizable from its original Joe Robbie Stadium incarnation after a multiyear, $500 million overhaul.

Football operations chief Mike Tannenbaum, who nipped and tucked at his roster in his first three seasons in Miami, gave it a complete face-lift this winter to produce the cultural change in the locker room Adam Gase wanted for 2018, his third season as head coach. The team is barely recognizable from last year's disappointing 6-10 version, let alone the promising 10-6 group of 2016, the team's first 10-win season and playoff appearance since 2008.

The March death of Wayne Huizenga, who owned the franchise from 1994 to 2009, was a reminder of how far removed the Dolphins are from perennial contention. Hard Rock will host the Super Bowl for the first time in a decade in 2020. The idea of the Fins playing in that game, which seemed at least within the realm of possibility a year ago, seems far

4 PREDICTED FINISH **AFC EAST**

less likely after the latest overhaul.

OFFENSE

Gase handles the playcalling and works directly with the quarterbacks. The Dolphins finished 28th in points scored and 25th in offensive yardage last season.

That prompted Gase to replace offensive coordinator Clyde Christensen with Dowell Loggains, who previously worked with Gase in Chicago and last season was the OC of a Bears team that averaged 16.5 points per game. Gase tends to be predictable and mundane on offense, running on early plays most always, but he considers longtime NFL offensive guru Mike Martz, the former Rams head coach, a mentor and could open things up with better personnel.

QUARTERBACKS: Ryan Tannehill has his detractors but did show improvement in each of his first five seasons before suffering a torn left ACL in December 2016. When the injury kept him sidelined, the Dolphins' 2017 season was essentially lost. Gase talked Jay Cutler out of starting his broadcasting career but was unable to coax a decent showing out of the much-maligned quarterback, whom he coached in Chicago. Gase is regarded as a "quarterback whisperer," but he's yet to do much with Tannehill or Cutler and has now brought another former pupil, Brock Osweiler, who despite starting 25 games over the last six seasons has yet

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Ryan Tannehill
	Brock Osweiler
RB	Frank Gore
	Kenyan Drake
LT	Laremy Tunsil
	Sam Young
LG	Josh Sitton
	Isaac Asiata
C	Daniel Kilgore
	Jake Brendel
RG	Jesse Davis
	Ted Larsen
RT	Ja'Wuan James
	Eric Smith
TE	MarQueis Gray
	A.J. Derby
WR	Danny Amendola
	Albert Wilson
WR	Kenny Stills
	Leonte Carroo
WR	DeVante Parker
	Jakeem Grant

DEFENSE

DE	Cameron Wake
	William Hayes
DT	Davon Godchaux
	Vincent Taylor
DT	Jordan Phillips
	Vincent Taylor
DE	Robert Quinn
	Andre Branch
OLB	Kiko Alonso
	Jerome Baker
MLB	Raekwon McMillan
	Mike Hull
OLB	Stephone Anthony
	Chase Allen
CB	Cordrea Tankersley
	Bobby McCain
CB	Xavien Howard
	Tony Lippett
SS	Reshad Jones
	Trae Elston
FS	T.J. McDonald
	Jordan Lucas

SPECIALISTS

LS	John Denney
P	Matt Haack
K	Jason Sanders
KR	Kenyan Drake
PR	Jakeem Grant

BYE: WEEK 11 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Game may be flexed to Saturday, Dec. 22.

Week 9
N.Y. Jets
Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM

Week 10
@ Green Bay
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM

Week 12
@ Indianapolis
Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM

Week 13
Buffalo
Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM

Week 14
New England
Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM

Week 15
@ Minnesota
Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM

Week 16
Jacksonville
Dec. 23* / TBD*

Week 17
@ Buffalo
Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

MIAMI **DOLPHINS**

Ryan Tannehill, QB

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
38-42

			PL	
8-8	8-8	6-10	10-6	6-10
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**
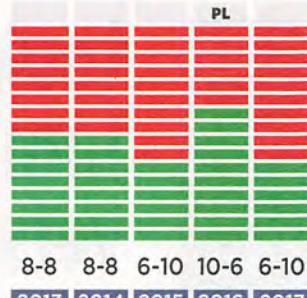
PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

to prove he's a reliable NFL signal-caller. Tannehill is expected back at full strength and, barring a tremendous preseason showing by Osweiler, the backup job will likely go to David Fales, who threw for 265 yards and a touchdown in Miami's Week 17 loss to Buffalo.

RUNNING BACKS: At 35, Miami native Frank Gore gets to play at home for the first time since his college days with the Miami Hurricanes. He ranks fifth on the NFL's career rushing list and enters his 14th season with 14,026 yards, just 75 yards shy of fourth-place Curtis Martin. Gore has logged some hard miles, especially considering teams once worried about his two ACL injuries that occurred during his college days before the 2005 draft. Still, the dependable workhorse, who has not missed a game in seven seasons, is part of Gase's locker-room overhaul that included dealing Jay Ajayi last midseason to the Eagles. Ajayi rushed for 1,272 yards in 2016, third most in franchise history, but lacked the tireless work ethic Gase prefers. Third-year back Kenyan Drake thrived after Ajayi's departure, racking up 444 yards on 91 carries over the last five weeks, and is a better receiver out of the backfield. He'll again serve as the backup and an insurance policy against Gore finally breaking down.

RECEIVERS: With three-time Pro Bowler Jarvis Landry and his NFL-leading 112 receptions dealt to Cleveland, this unit also has a new look. Danny Amendola, signed to a two-year deal, is the most proven commodity. But he must show he's not just a product of having Tom Brady throwing to him; Amendola has never recorded more than 689 yards in any of his nine seasons. The Dolphins signed Albert Wilson to a three-year

deal. He put up modest numbers in four seasons at Kansas City, including a career-best 42 catches for 554 yards in 2017. Wilson figures to be a backup unless he beats out Kenny Stills or DeVante Parker, who's perhaps the most gifted athlete on the roster. But Parker, the 2015 first-round pick, managed just one TD in '17 on 57 receptions for 670 yards. Stills (58 catches, 847 yards, 6 TDs) is the best deep threat. Tight end remains a revolving door with MarQueis Gray, A.J. Derby and Thomas Duarte in the mix.

OFFENSIVE LINE: This is another new-look unit with longtime center and captain Mike Pouncey having been released. Ten-year veteran Josh Sitton arrives from Chicago, where he spent two seasons under new OC Loggains, and will provide stability at left guard, a problem area in recent years. At 32 and a four-time Pro Bowler, Sitton is still regarded to be

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Dolphins

"These guys took a major step back last year and you can't blame all of that on not having (Ryan) Tannehill. Then you get rid of (Ndamukong) Suh, (Jarvis) Landry and Jay Ajayi—that's a lot of playmakers. Their secondary is not bad, but they can never put together a group of linebackers and, with Suh gone, you have to wonder if **(Cameron) Wake** isn't going to finally start looking

old. ... For years now you've known you can keep running the ball right at these guys and that should again be the case. If the (offensive) line can come together and keep Tannehill upright, they have enough weapons, especially if (Frank) Gore keeps chugging along. But you look at where they are on balance from the end of last year and kind of shake your head. Maybe Gase got the guys he wanted in his locker room, but they look like a 6-10 team again."

↘ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/17	W	19-17	Los Angeles Chargers
09/24	L	6-20	New York Jets
10/01	L	0-20	New Orleans Saints
10/08	W	16-10	Tennessee Titans
10/15	W	20-17	Atlanta Falcons
10/22	W	31-28	New York Jets
10/26	L	0-40	Baltimore Ravens
11/05	L	24-27	Oakland Raiders
11/13	L	21-45	Carolina Panthers
11/19	L	20-30	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
11/26	L	17-35	New England Patriots
12/03	W	35-9	Denver Broncos
12/11	W	27-20	New England Patriots
12/17	L	16-24	Buffalo Bills
12/24	L	13-29	Kansas City Chiefs
12/31	L	16-22	Buffalo Bills

2017 RECORD: 6-10

RUSHING

	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Ajayi	138	465	3.4	21	0
Drake	133	644	4.8	66t	3
Williams	46	181	3.9	69	0
Cutler	19	32	1.7	9	0
Perry	8	30	3.8	12	0
Gray	5	14	2.8	5	0
Fales	4	8	2.0	3	1
Grant	3	12	4.0	7	0
Moore	3	9	3.0	7	0
Landry	1	-7	-7.0	-7	0
MIAMI	360	1,388	3.9	69	4
OPPONENTS	431	1,768	4.1	69	14

RECEIVING

	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Landry	112	987	8.8	49	9
Stills	58	847	14.6	61t	6
Parker	57	670	11.8	36	1
Thomas	41	388	9.5	27	3
Drake	32	239	7.5	47	1
Williams	20	155	7.8	24	1
Ajayi	14	67	4.8	15	0
Grant	13	203	15.6	65t	2
Fasano	12	107	8.9	29	1
Carroo	7	69	9.9	21	0
Smith	3	27	9.0	13	0
Derby	2	20	10.0	11	0
Gray	1	10	10.0	10	0
Perry	1	3	3.0	3	0
MIAMI	373	3,792	10.2	65t	24
OPPONENTS	339	3,788	11.2	69t	26

PASSING

	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Cutler	429	266	2,666	19	14
Moore	127	78	861	4	5
Fales	43	29	265	1	1
Gray	1	0	0	0	0
Haack	1	0	0	0	1
Landry	1	0	0	0	0
MIAMI	602	373	3,535	24	21
OPPONENTS	528	339	3,603	26	9

KICK RETURNS

	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Grant	21	479	22.8	31	0
Perry	10	202	20.2	37	0
Drake	7	147	21.0	34	0
Derby	1	11	11.0	11	0
Landry	1	-5	-5.0	-5	0
MIAMI	40	834	20.9	37	0
OPPONENTS	34	665	19.6	36	0

PUNT RETURNS

	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Grant	25	190	7.6	27	0
Landry	12	81	6.8	16	0
MIAMI	37	271	7.3	27	0
OPPONENTS	35	220	6.3	23	0

SACKS

MIAMI 30.0, OPPONENTS 33.0

Wake 10.5, Branch 4.5, Suh 4.5, Harris 2.0, Phillips 2.0, Jones 1.5, Alonso 1.0, Hayes 1.0, Howard 1.0, Malveaux 1.0, McCain 1.0

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	307.7	25
Rushing	86.8	29
Passing	220.9	18
Scoring	17.6	28
Punt returns	7.3	21
Kick returns	20.9	20
Red zone TD%	52.6	19
Total defense	335.7	16
Against rush	110.5	14
Against pass	225.2	16
Points allowed	24.6	29
Interceptions	9	28
Sacks	30.0	26t
Turnover diff.	-14	29t

GASE: STEVEN SENNE / AP

among the best at his position and should help former first-rounder Laremy Tunsil, whose transition from left guard to tackle has been uneven at best. Veteran Daniel Kilgore, acquired from San Francisco, takes over at center and will again block for Gore, the former 49er. Ja'Wuan James spent much of the offseason on the trading block but survived the roster overhaul. The 2014 first-round pick has become a stabilizing force at right tackle, though he missed a half-season with injuries in 2017 for the second time in three years. Jesse Davis, a former undrafted free agent, was a pleasant surprise in 2017 and again will start at right guard.

DEFENSE

Matt Burke looked overwhelmed in his first year as the Dolphins' defensive coordinator, but then again Vance Joseph's 2016 unit allowed more yards than any Miami team and Joseph parlayed that into the head-coaching position in Denver. The Dolphins retained their 4-3 scheme under Burke and gave up the fourth-most points in the league but ranked 16th in both total defense and passing defense. Considering the relative youth of the unit—Miami spent all but two draft picks in 2017 on defense—that represents progress.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Ndamukong Suh generally lived up to the six-year, $114 million contract that at the time it was signed three years ago made him the NFL's highest-paid defensive player. But the Dolphins won just 22 of those games in his three seasons and Suh became a casualty

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Miami head coach Adam Gase
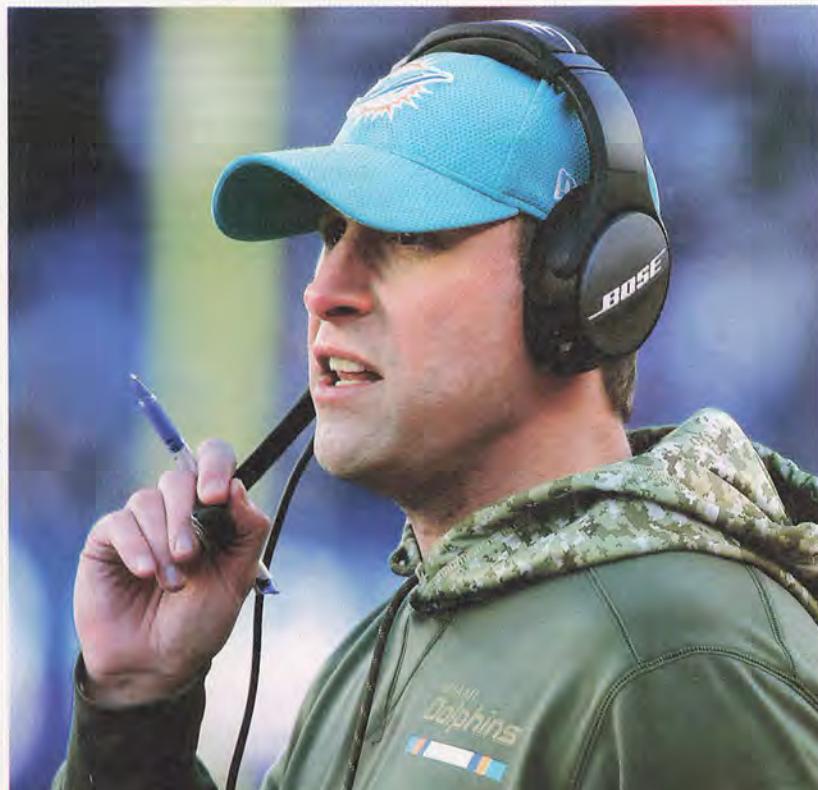
Like his mentor, Mike Martz, Gase loves the screen pass and wide-open offenses that free up wide receivers. Gase also likes to run on early downs out of two-tight end formations. He enters 2018 lacking in elite personnel to do any of this, meaning he'll at least have to be more flexible and unpredictable by necessity. Gase calls his own plays and gives his defensive coordinator more freedom, which makes Matt Burke, like Vance Joseph before him, a key decision-maker. The offseason overhaul illustrates that Gase has no patience for players who aren't tireless workers like himself, no matter how talented.

MIAMI **DOLPHINS**

The skill-position guys—Frank Gore, Albert Wilson and Danny Amendola—should put up numbers, but guard Josh Sitton could play a bigger role to settle an offensive line with Mike Pouncey gone. Sitton provides a strong presence in the locker room and has started at least 12 games in each of the past nine seasons.

of Gase's culture change. Cameron Wake racked up 10.5 sacks in 2017 and is the NFL's sack leader since he entered the league in 2009, but he'll play this season at age 36. The Dolphins acquired Robert Quinn from the Rams and he'll return to his natural position of end after playing linebacker last year. Run-stopping specialist William Hayes signed a one-year deal to remain in Miami. He's part of a group of ends that also includes Andre Branch and Charles Harris. Less certain is tackle after Suh's departure. Jordan Phillips is coming off a breakout third season there and 2017 draft picks Davon Godchaux and Vincent Taylor again figure to see significant time inside.

LINEBACKERS: A perennial problem area that last year contributed to the Dolphins allowing 4.1 yards per carry. Miami lacks a linebacker who can cover tight ends and tried to address that in the draft with third-round pick Jerome Baker of Ohio State. This essentially will be a new group led by middle linebacker Raekwon McMillan, a second-round pick in 2017 who missed his rookie campaign with a knee injury sustained in his first snap of the preseason. Kiko Alonso led the team in tackles in 2016 but was beat repeatedly in coverage last season. Stephone Anthony, acquired from the Saints last preseason, is a former

first-round pick who had a strong rookie year in 2015 and could yet become a contributor. The Dolphins signed sixth-year veteran linebacker Terence Garvin, who played in Seattle last season, but he's viewed as more of a backup and special-teamer.

SECONDARY: This is Miami's rare young-and-promising unit. The Dolphins have a pair of solid young corners in Xavien Howard and Cordrea Tankersley, who battled through injuries as a rookie. Tony Lippett, a 2015 fifth-rounder, is coming back from injury and Bobby McCain likely will continue as the nickel cornerback. Strong safety Reshad Jones earned his second Pro Bowl nod, leading all NFL safeties with a team-leading 122 tackles. T.J. McDonald is back at free safety, but the Dolphins must replace backup Michael Thomas, who signed with the Giants. First-round draft pick Minkah Fitzpatrick can play both safety and cornerback. The Dolphins played eight rookies on defense in 2017 and three contributed significantly in the secondary: Tankersley, cornerback Torry McTyer and safety Maurice Smith. Walt Aikens re-signed and can play corner or safety.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The coordinator of this unit, Darren Rizzi, is the longest-tenured member of the Dolphins staff, hired in 2010 as part of ex-head coach

Tony Sparano's regime. Since he was promoted to coordinator in 2011, Miami is second in the league with 20 overall blocked kicks and first with 10 blocked punts. They'll miss departed free agent and special-teams captain Thomas, who was named NFL Special Teams Player of the Year last season for the third time in five years by *Pro Football Focus* because of his coverage and blocking. Punter Matt Haack returns after a strong rookie campaign in which he placed 30 punts inside the 20. Miami will turn to another rookie this year to handle the placekicking in seventh-round draft pick Jason Sanders of New Mexico.

Backup running back Drake and reserve wideout Jakeem Grant provide the occasional excitement returning kicks and punts, respectively. Long snapper John Denney, who will turn 40 in December, is by far the team's longest-tenured player and has played in 208 straight games dating to 2005.

BOTTOM LINE

Tannenbaum and Gase overhauled the roster by unloading their best players on offense (Landry) and defense (Suh). It's difficult to see improvement from 6-10, especially with a roster that got older with all of the comings and goings. The Dolphins will be relying a lot on Gore and Wake, two guys who have celebrated 35th birthdays. Admittedly, the Eagles won a Super Bowl behind a flurry of offseason deals for veterans who became key contributors due to injury. But Miami's newcomers seem mostly like placeholders until the team can rebuild (again) through the draft.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C-
2018 STOCKWATCH: SELL

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Dolphins put together back-to-back winning seasons was 2002-03 when coach Dave Wannstedt led them to a 9-7 mark in 2002 that was followed by a 10-6 record and second-place finish in the AFC East. Ironically, the Dolphins, who were quarterbacked by undrafted Ivy Leaguer Jay Fiedler both years, didn't make the playoffs in either season.

↘ NEW ARRIVALS

- **RB** Frank Gore
  (free agent, Indianapolis)
- **OG** Josh Sitton
  (free agent, Chicago)
- **C** Daniel Kilgore
  (trade, San Francisco)
- **WR** Danny Amendola
  (free agent, New England)
- **DE** Robert Quinn
  (trade, L.A. Rams)
- **WR** Albert Wilson
  (free agent, Kansas City)

Danny Amendola

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

First-round pick **Minkah Fitzpatrick**, who can play both safety and cornerback, is a huge playmaker who should help the Dolphins keep from getting destroyed by tight ends as they were last season. Second-round tight end Mike Gesicki from Penn State isn't much of a blocker but had a 41.5-inch vertical leap at the Combine and catches everything thrown his way. He's essentially another slot receiver target for Tannehill and could start immediately. Ohio State's Jerome Baker, the third-round pick, fills a huge need at outside linebacker and, along with Fitzpatrick, brings much-needed speed and athleticism to the defense.

2018 DRAFT GRADE B+
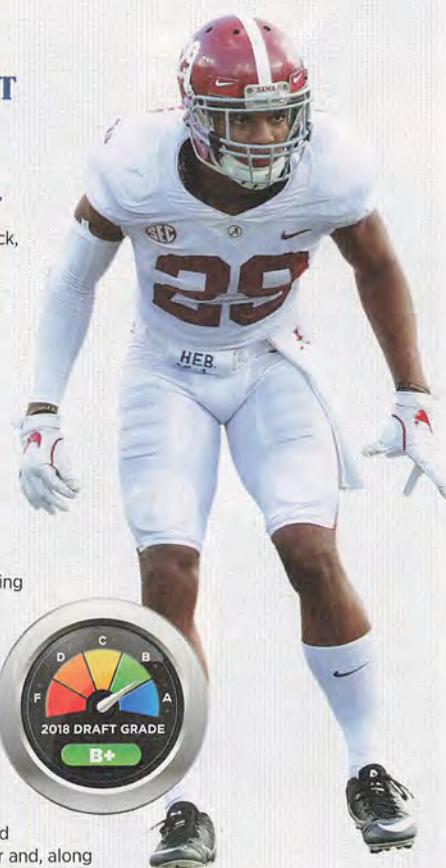
↘ THE DOLPHINS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	11	Minkah Fitzpatrick	S	6-1	202	21	Alabama
2	42	Mike Gesicki	TE	6-6	249	22	Penn State
3	73	Jerome Baker	LB	6-1	225	21	Ohio State
4	123	Durham Smythe	TE	6-4	253	23	Notre Dame
4	131	Kalen Ballage	RB	6-3	229	22	Arizona State
6	209	Cornell Armstrong	CB	5-11	180	22	Southern Miss
7	227	Quentin Poling	LB	6-0	235	24	Ohio
7	229	Jason Sanders	K	5-11	186	22	New Mexico

↘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Adam Gase, **Head Coach;** Dowell Loggains, **Offensive Coordinator;** Matt Burke, **Defensive Coordinator;** Darren Rizzi, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9 Fales, David	QB	6-2	213	27	4	San Jose State
Osweiler, Brock	QB	6-7	240	27	6	Arizona State
17 Tannehill, Ryan	QB	6-4	216	30	7	Texas A&M

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
68 Asiata, Isaac	G	6-3	341	25	2	Utah
64 Brendel, Jake	C	6-4	299	26	3	UCLA
77 Davis, Jesse	G/T	6-6	321	26	2	Idaho
63 Hickey, Sean	T	6-6	306	26	1	Syracuse
70 James, Ja'Wuan	T	6-6	307	26	5	Tennessee
Joseph, Roubbens	T	6-4	312	23	1	Buffalo
Kilgore, Daniel	C	6-3	308	30	8	Appalachian State
62 Larsen, Ted	C/G	6-3	320	31	9	N.C. State
Sitton, Josh	G	6-3	320	32	11	UCF
72 Smith, Eric	T	6-4	321	23	2	Virginia
71 Sterup, Zach	T	6-9	318	26	2	Nebraska
67 Tunsil, Laremy	T	6-5	318	24	3	Ole Miss
79 Young, Sam	T	6-8	306	31	9	Notre Dame

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
32 Drake, Kenyan	RB	6-1	211	24	3	Alabama
Gore, Frank	RB	5-9	212	35	14	Miami (Fla.)
34 Perry, Senorise	RB	6-0	210	26	4	Louisville
37 Radcliff, Brandon	RB	5-9	216	25	1	Louisville

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
Amendola, Danny	WR	5-11	190	32	10	Texas Tech
88 Carroo, Leonte	WR	6-1	215	24	3	Rutgers
85 Derby, A.J.	TE	6-5	255	26	4	Arkansas
83 Duarte, Thomas	TE	6-2	244	23	2	UCLA
Escobar, Gavin	TE	6-6	260	27	5	San Diego State
15 Ford, Isaiah	WR	6-2	195	22	2	Virginia Tech
19 Grant, Jakeem	WR	5-7	169	25	3	Texas Tech
48 Gray, MarQueis	TE	6-4	263	28	6	Minnesota
18 Lewis, Malcolm	WR	5-10	194	24	1	Miami (Fla.)
81 Morgan, Drew	WR	6-0	187	23	1	Arkansas
82 Owusu, Francis	WR	6-3	210	23	1	Stanford
11 Parker, DeVante	WR	6-3	212	25	4	Louisville
87 Scott, Rashawn	WR	6-0	199	26	3	Miami (Fla.)
10 Stills, Kenny	WR	6-1	196	26	6	Oklahoma
Wilson, Albert	WR	5-9	200	26	5	Georgia State

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
50 Branch, Andre	DE	6-5	263	29	7	Clemson
56 Godchaux, Davon	DT	6-3	305	23	2	LSU
90 Harris, Charles	DE	6-3	250	23	2	Missouri
95 Hayes, William	DE	6-3	278	33	11	Winston-Salem State
75 Malveaux, Cameron	DE	6-5	276	23	1	Houston
97 Phillips, Jordan	DT	6-6	333	25	4	Oklahoma
Quinn, Robert	DE	6-4	250	28	8	North Carolina
96 Taylor, Vincent	DT	6-3	296	24	2	Oklahoma State
91 Wake, Cameron	DE	6-3	263	36	10	Penn State
76 Woodard, Jonathan	DE	6-6	287	24	1	Central Arkansas
98 Wright, Gabe	DT	6-3	305	26	3	Auburn

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
59 Allen, Chase	LB	6-3	250	25	2	Southern Illinois
47 Alonso, Kiko	LB	6-3	233	28	6	Oregon
44 Anthony, Stephone	LB	6-3	245	26	4	Clemson
Garvin, Terence	LB	6-3	235	27	6	West Virginia
45 Hull, Mike	LB	6-0	232	27	3	Penn State
52 McMillan, Raekwon	LB	6-2	248	22	2	Ohio State

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
35 Aikens, Walt	S	6-1	212	27	5	Liberty
40 Calhoun, Taveze	CB	6-1	188	25	1	Mississippi State
43 Elston, Trae	S	6-0	190	24	2	Ole Miss
41 Howard, Tracy	CB	5-10	185	24	2	Miami (Fla.)
25 Howard, Xavien	CB	6-1	196	25	3	Baylor
20 Jones, Reshad	S	6-1	223	30	9	Georgia
36 Lippett, Tony	CB	6-3	192	26	4	Michigan State
21 Lucas, Jordan	S	6-0	202	25	3	Penn State
28 McCain, Bobby	CB	5-11	192	25	4	Memphis
22 McDonald, T.J.	S	6-2	223	27	6	USC
33 McTyer, Torry	CB	5-11	184	23	2	UNLV
27 Smith, Maurice	S	6-0	197	23	2	Georgia
30 Tankersley, Cordrea	CB	6-1	196	24	2	Clemson

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
92 Denney, John	LS	6-5	242	39	14	BYU
16 Haack, Matt	P	6-0	205	24	2	Arizona State

PITTSBURGH
STEELERS

Ben Roethlisberger, QB
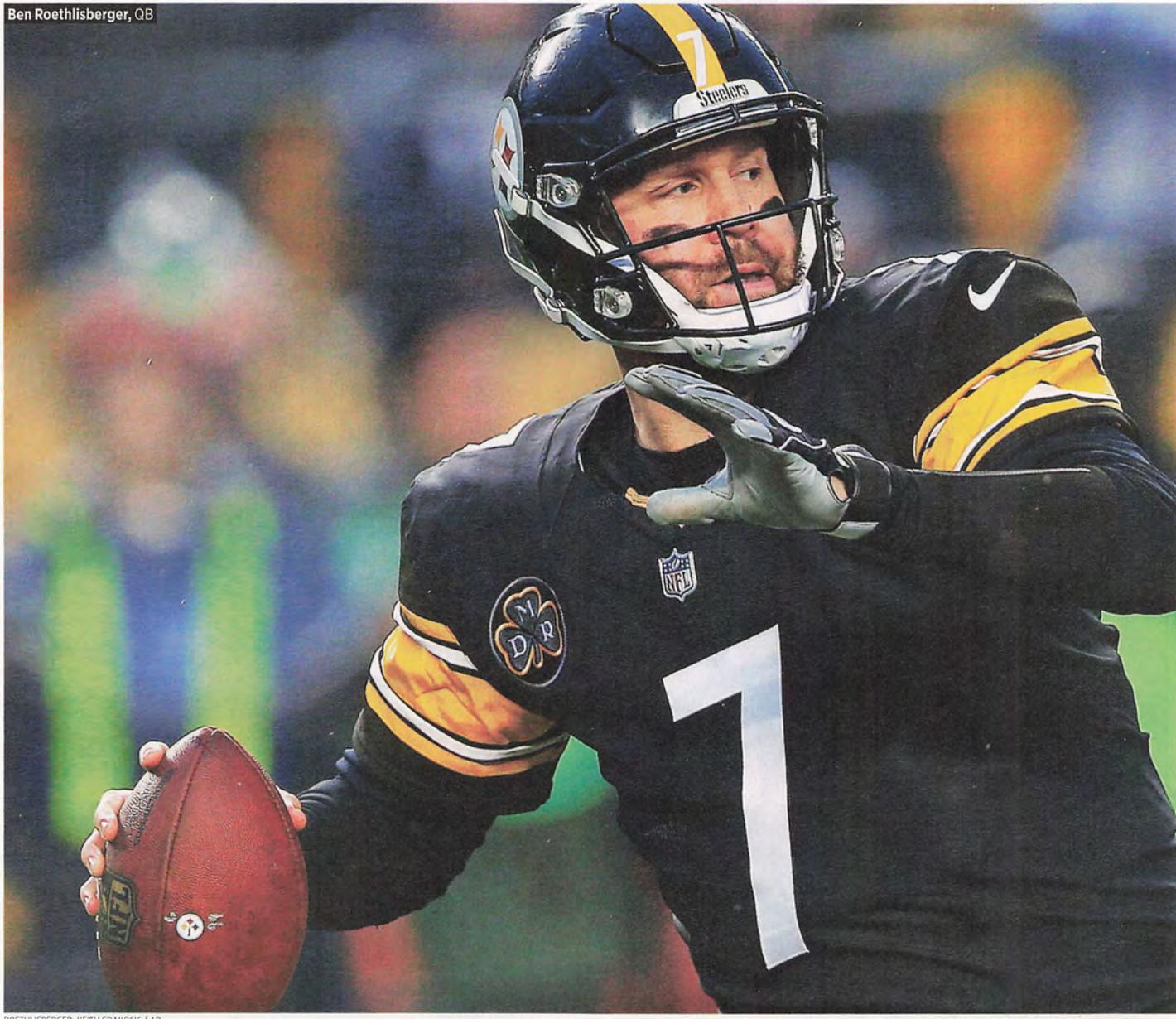
ROETHLISBERGER: KEITH SRAKOCIC / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 8	Week 9
@ Cleveland	Kansas City	@ Tampa Bay	Baltimore	Atlanta	@ Cincinnati	Cleveland	@ Baltimore
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 24 / 8:15 PM	Sept. 30 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM

Steelers

Pittsburgh looks to get back to its 'Steel Curtain' roots to challenge for a Super Bowl

BY GERRY DULAC
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

After winning the division title for the sixth time in 11 seasons under coach Mike Tomlin and tying for the best record in the NFL, the Steelers would appear to be content they are moving in the right direction.

But they are not.

Not only did their 2017 season end quickly with a divisional-round playoff loss to the Jaguars, but they were pushed around on both lines of scrimmage and the defense gave up 45 points.

"Unless we are winning a championship, no one will sit here and say we were good enough," says general manager Kevin Colbert.

Nonetheless, the Steelers should have no problem winning the AFC North again and making another run at the Super Bowl. They have their entire offense returning, including the Killer Bs—Ben Roethlisberger, Antonio Brown and Le'Veon Bell—and they made moves during the offseason to help make up for the loss of inside linebacker Ryan Shazier.

"We know we have a challenge defensively," Colbert says. "We have to get better against the run."

OFFENSE

The Steelers have moved on from Todd Haley and replaced him with Randy Fichtner as offensive coordinator. Fichtner was the team's quarterbacks coach who had a good relationship with Roethlisberger, something that wasn't always the case with Haley. But the offense enjoyed success under Haley, so it's unlikely much will change under the new coordinator. If anything, Roethlisberger might enjoy more freedom to call plays and run the no-huddle with Fichtner. But the focus of the attack will remain the same.

QUARTERBACKS: The good news is Roethlisberger said he intends to play two to three more years, an abrupt change from his declaration after the 2016 season that he wasn't sure if he wanted to return.

Even more good news for depth at the position: The Steelers moved up to get Mason Rudolph in the third round of the draft, likely forcing the departure of Joshua Dobbs.

Rudolph might eventually be the replacement for Roethlisberger, but that apparently could be a long way down the road. But he was not brought in to be the immediate top backup at the position. That role will still belong to Landry Jones, whom the Steelers believe is better than 80 percent of the backups in the league.

Roethlisberger's career is showing no signs of decline. He is coming off a season during which he was at his absolute and productive best the second half of the

1
PREDICTED FINISH **AFC NORTH**

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Ben Roethlisberger
	Landry Jones
FB	Roosevelt Nix
RB	Le'Veon Bell
	James Conner
LT	Alejandro Villanueva
	Jerald Hawkins
LG	Ramon Foster
	B.J. Finney
C	Maurkice Pouncey
	B.J. Finney
RG	David DeCastro
	B.J. Finney
RT	Marcus Gilbert
	Chukwuma Okorafor
TE	Vance McDonald
	Jesse James
WR	JuJu Smith-Schuster
	Justin Hunter
WR	Antonio Brown
	James Washington

DEFENSE

DE	Cameron Heyward
	Tyson Alualu
NT	Javon Hargrave
	Daniel McCullers
DE	Stephon Tuitt
	Tyson Alualu
OLB	T.J. Watt
	Anthony Chickillo
ILB	Vince Williams
	Tyler Matakevich
ILB	Jon Bostic
	L.J. Fort
OLB	Bud Dupree
	Keion Adams
CB	Artie Burns
	Cameron Sutton
CB	Joe Haden
	Coty Sensabaugh
SS	Morgan Burnett
	Terrell Edmunds
FS	Sean Davis
	Nat Berhe

SPECIALISTS

LS	Kameron Canaday
P	Jordan Berry
K	Chris Boswell
KR	JuJu Smith-Schuster
PR	Antonio Brown

BYE: WEEK 7 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Carolina	@ Jacksonville	@ Denver	L.A. Chargers	@ Oakland	New England	@ New Orleans	Cincinnati
Nov. 8 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 18 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 25 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 16 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 23 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

PITTSBURGH **STEELERS**

Le'Veon Bell, RB

⬊ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
53-27

	PL	PL	PL	PL

8-8	11-5	10-6	11-5	13-3
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
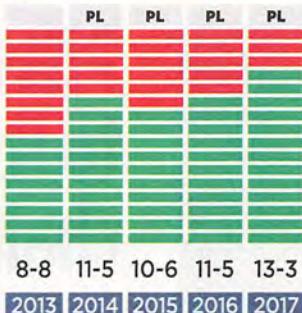
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

year. What's more, his sack total has steadily declined since he averaged 47.25 sacks during a four-year period beginning in 2006. He has been sacked just 58 times in the past three seasons.

RUNNING BACKS: This can be a potentially disruptive situation because of the contract status of Bell, who will probably skip training camp again before he signs the franchise tag the team placed on him. He has even indicated he might sit out longer if he doesn't get the long-term contract he desires.

That will be a problem because there is no proven back who is accustomed to an NFL workload behind him.

Bell is the best all-purpose back in the league, but he averaged just 4.0 yards per carry and had only three runs longer than 20 yards in 2017 (none longer than 27 yards). That is not an impressive number in an offense that has Roethlisberger and Brown and one of the best lines in the league.

The top backup is James Conner, last year's third-round draft choice who missed the final two games with a knee injury. Conner averaged 4.5 yards on 32 carries as a rookie. But the team also re-signed former Patriots running back Stevan Ridley to provide veteran depth.

RECEIVERS: Brown's production and consistency the past five seasons is among the best in NFL history.

Throw in the rapid development of JuJu Smith-Schuster, last year's big-play rookie sensation, and this is a position of strength for the Steelers.

And it could get even better with rookie James Washington, a productive, deep-threat receiver who was drafted in the second round to replace Martavis Bryant.

But the depth is a little sketchy after that. Slot receiver Eli Rogers had not been re-signed at press time after having ACL surgery in January. And Justin Hunter had little production after being signed in free agency last season, catching just four passes for 23 yards.

Brown's productivity has been off the charts. He has caught at least 100 passes for more than 1,200 yards in each of his past five seasons. He has 52 receiving touchdowns in that time.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The Steelers have invested heavily in their offensive line, giving second contracts to each of their five starters. The result is arguably the best O-line in the league that includes two All-Pros–center Maurkice Pouncey and right guard David DeCastro. Left tackle Alejandro Villanueva surprisingly made the Pro Bowl in his second full season as a starter and Marcus Gilbert is considered one of the best right tackles in the league.

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Steelers

"He's (Le'Veon Bell) a tremendous player. He's a receiver when he's out of the backfield. He can run any run you want—inside, outside, runs with power, runs with a lot of skill and quickness in the open field. And he's so very patient. He uses that patience to find holes that might not otherwise be there. On top of that, he's an excellent receiver in the passing game. He's a big guy, too, who can blitz pickup, matches up well against linebackers and DBs that he has to block. He's a tremendous player. You put him on the same offense with **Antonio Brown**, those two guys are very hard to defend. They are dynamic players that have the ability to do so many things. Two-thirds of the offense with two guys—that's a lot of offense."

⬂ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	21-18	Cleveland Browns
09/17	W	26-9	Minnesota Vikings
09/24	L	17-23	Chicago Bears
10/01	W	26-9	Baltimore Ravens
10/08	L	9-30	Jacksonville Jaguars
10/15	W	19-13	Kansas City Chiefs
10/22	W	29-14	Cincinnati Bengals
10/29	W	20-15	Detroit Lions
11/12	W	20-17	Indianapolis Colts
11/16	W	40-17	Tennessee Titans
11/26	W	31-28	Green Bay Packers
12/04	W	23-20	Cincinnati Bengals
12/10	W	39-38	Baltimore Ravens
12/17	L	24-27	New England Patriots
12/25	W	34-6	Houston Texans
12/31	W	28-24	Cleveland Browns
2017 RECORD: 13-3			

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Bell	321	1,291	4.0	27	9
Conner	32	144	4.5	23	0
Roethlisberger	28	47	1.7	14	0
Ridley	26	108	4.2	21	1
Jones	8	-10	-1.3	0	0
Toussaint	6	25	4.2	7	0
Bryant	6	22	3.7	13	0
Watson	5	8	1.6	3	0
Nix	3	0	0.0	1t	1
Heyward-Bey	2	32	16.0	29t	1
PITTSBURGH	437	1,667	3.8	29t	12
OPPONENTS	385	1,693	4.4	90t	14

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Brown	101	1,533	15.2	57	9
Bell	85	655	7.7	42	2
Smith-Schuster	58	917	15.8	97t	7
Bryant	50	603	12.1	51	3
James	43	372	8.7	32	3
Rogers	18	149	8.3	18t	1
McDonald	14	188	13.4	28	1
Grimble	5	32	6.4	12	1
Hunter	4	23	5.8	7	1
Heyward-Bey	2	47	23.5	44	0
Toussaint	2	9	4.5	7	0
Nix	2	6	3.0	5	1
PITTSBURGH	384	4,534	11.8	97t	29
OPPONENTS	297	3,610	12.2	75t	20

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Roethlisberger	561	360	4,251	28	14
Jones	28	23	239	1	1
Golden	1	1	44	0	0
PITTSBURGH	590	384	4,380	29	15
OPPONENTS	499	297	3,217	20	16

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Smith-Schuster	9	240	26.7	96t	1
Bryant	9	151	16.8	38	0
Watson	7	140	20.0	25	0
Toussaint	6	94	15.7	23	0
Golden	1	5	5.0	5	0
Grimble	1	0	0.0	0	0
PITTSBURGH	33	630	19.1	96t	1
OPPONENTS	43	906	21.1	40	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Rogers	19	146	7.7	27	0
Brown	11	61	5.5	16	0
PITTSBURGH	30	207	6.9	27	0
OPPONENTS	23	177	7.7	32	0

SACKS   PITTSBURGH 56.0, OPPONENTS 24.0

Heyward 12.0, Williams 8.0, Watt 7.0, Dupree 6.0, Alualu 4.0, Hilton 4.0, Chickillo 3.0, Tuitt 3.0, Hargrave 2.0, Walton 2.0, Davis 1.0, Fort 1.0, Haden 1.0, Harrison 1.0, Spence 1.0

⬂ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	377.9	3
Rushing	104.2	20
Passing	273.8	3
Scoring	25.4	8
Punt returns	6.9	23
Kick returns	19.1	29
Red zone TD%	53.0	18
Total defense	306.9	5
Against rush	105.8	10
Against pass	201.1	5
Points allowed	19.2	7
Interceptions	16	9t
Sacks	56.0	1
Turnover diff.	-2	14

That's why Bell's rushing average was a disappointment, considering the line he runs behind.

The veteran in the group is left guard Ramon Foster, whose playing time could decrease. His backup, B.J. Finney, is a very good run blocker who, coincidentally, was a fill-in starter for Foster when the Steelers had their best rushing performances of the season.

But the line's primary responsibility is protecting its $100 million quarterback and the unit has done that very well.

DEFENSE

The team keeps addressing defense in the draft and the players seem to be in place, but blown assignments and miscommunication–not to mention consistency–seem to be a recurring problem. The biggest issue confronting the defense is how to move on successfully without Shazier, something they never figured out after he sustained a serious spinal cord injury in December. He was the one player the defense could least afford to lose.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Cameron Heyward rebounded from an injury-shortened season in 2016 to earn All-Pro honors, even though he wasn't selected to the Pro Bowl.

But the other defensive end, Stephon Tuitt, was bothered all season by a triceps and elbow injury and never played to the same level he showed in 2016 when Heyward missed nine games.

Still, what was disappointing to the Steelers was the way the line was dominated in two losses to the Jaguars, especially in the AFC divisional-round game. In particular, the Steelers were gashed by the run in both games, making

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Pittsburgh head coach Mike Tomlin

Tomlin has shown over the years he has never been afraid to take calculated, if not unconventional, gambles at any point in the game. He is never afraid to go on fourth down, no matter the time of game or field position, and is adept at finding weaknesses and attacking them with his offense. It is one of the reasons his players like playing for him. What's more, he has not been afraid to make moves to help improve his team. Tomlin is more of a delegator than hands-on coach, but he is more involved with the playcalling on defense than his detractors would think.

PITTSBURGH **STEELERS**

that a point of emphasis in the offseason.

Heyward, though, finished the season with a team-high 12.0 sacks despite constant double teams.

Nose tackle Javon Hargrave, a third-round pick in 2016, is deceptively quick for a thick player, but his playing time has been reduced because the Steelers use their sub-packages 75 percent of the time. The addition of end Tyson Alualu in free agency last offseason was a good pickup because it gave the Steelers a player they could use to spell Heyward or Tuitt.

LINEBACKERS: What was once an area of strength with four No. 1 picks as starters has now become something of a question mark.

If T.J. Watt can build off a very good rookie season, he can become a disruptive force on the outside. But the team needs to see a lot more from Bud Dupree, another former No. 1 pick, on the left edge.

The Steelers took a leap of faith on Dupree by picking up his fifth-year option, but his production has been inconsistent, if not spotty, and he hasn't been very effective against the run.

But the biggest problem is on the inside where the Steelers have not done a lot to try to replace Shazier. Jon Bostic was signed in free agency and will likely begin the season next to Vince Williams at inside linebacker. But he is not the

long-term answer and the Steelers failed to find a serious replacement in the draft.

SECONDARY: The team took several big steps in the offseason to improve the back end of their defense, and it began with the release of free safety Mike Mitchell.

The Steelers replaced him by signing Morgan Burnett in free agency, a player who can play both safety positions, and then used their top pick on safety Terrell Edmunds. Burnett will begin the season at strong safety and Sean Davis will transition to free safety to take advantage of his range, something that was lacking with Mitchell.

The acquisition of former Pro Bowl cornerback Joe Haden solidified the secondary, but the team would like to see a bigger step from former No. 1 pick Artie Burns, who needs to be more of a playmaker.

A potential surprise could come from Cameron Sutton, last year's third-round pick who missed much of the season with injury. Sutton is athletic and smart and might be better suited in man coverage than Burns.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Chris Boswell has quickly become one of the most dependable and clutch kickers in the league, converting 89.5 percent of his field goals in three seasons, including 29

Morgan Burnett was signed in free agency from the Packers to replace Mike Mitchell, who was released. But Burnett will likely play strong safety with the Steelers, allowing them to move Sean Davis to free safety. Burnett gives them a strong presence in the middle, something that has been lacking, and he should be more of a playmaker than Mitchell.

of 30 in December. He has also not missed a field goal in 15 attempts during the postseason.

The team might have finally found a quality kick returner in Smith-Schuster, who last season had the first kick return for a TD in seven years for the Steelers.

Brown gave way to Rogers for most of the punt-return duties last season, but Rogers was not re-signed after ACL surgery, creating an opening there. Brown, of course, is always an option, and a good one with four career touchdown returns, but the team would like to avoid using him in that role on a full-time basis.

BOTTOM LINE

The Steelers are more than capable of making another run at the Super Bowl. The majority of their starters return from last season's 13-3 team, including the entire offense. And they've added key components in free agency and the draft to address their issues on defense.

The key will be how well Tomlin and defensive coordinator Keith Butler are able to make up for the loss of Shazier, the most indispensable player on defense. They were never able to do that last season and it was one of the reasons for their early playoff exit. But they should have no problem winning the division again and challenging for a first-round bye.

2018 TEAM GRADE: A-
2018 STOCKWATCH: OUTPERFORM

THE LAST TIME ...

... a quarterback not named Terry Bradshaw or Ben Roethlisberger received the majority of the "airtime" during a Super Bowl-winning season for the Steelers was 1974 when backup **Joe Gilliam** won the starter's job in camp and went on to throw 212 passes to Bradshaw's 148. Both completed only 45.3 percent of their throws for the campaign and had more interceptions than touchdown passes. Pittsburgh's top-ranked "Steel Curtain" defense made up for that inconsistency, however, with four future Hall-of-Famers among the starters. Bradshaw won his job back at midseason and led the Steelers to two playoff victories and a 16-6 triumph over Minnesota to win their first of four Super Bowls in the 1970s.

➘ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **S** Morgan Burnett
  (free agent, Green Bay)
- **LB** Jon Bostic
  (free agent, Indianapolis)

Jon Bostic

NFL DRAFT
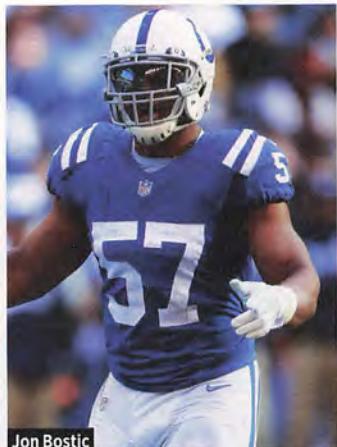
THE DRAFT REPORT

The selection of Terrell Edmunds with the 28th overall pick was something of a surprise, but he fits exactly what the Steelers are looking for: a hybrid safety who can play inside in the box in their sub-package defenses. And getting big-play receiver **James Washington** in the second round was a good move to quickly replace Martavis Bryant as a deep threat. But for a team that needs help in the middle on defense, the Steelers used three of their first four picks on offense. Using a third-rounder on a quarterback, Mason Rudolph, who won't be the top backup and might not play for three years was a waste.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
B

➘ THE STEELERS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	28	Terrell Edmunds	S	6-1	217	21	Virginia Tech
2	60	James Washington	WR	5-11	213	22	Oklahoma State
3	76	Mason Rudolph	QB	6-5	235	23	Oklahoma State
3	92	Chukwuma Okorafor	OL	6-6	320	22	Western Michigan
5	148	Marcus Allen	S	6-2	215	22	Penn State
5	165	Jaylen Samuels	RB	6-0	225	23	N.C. State
7	246	Joshua Frazier	DT	6-3	321	22	Alabama

➘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Mike Tomlin, **Head Coach;** Randy Fichtner, **Offensive Coordinator;** Keith Butler, **Defensive Coordinator;** Danny Smith, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
5 Dobbs, Joshua	QB	6-3	216	23	1	Tennessee
3 Jones, Landry	QB	6-4	225	29	6	Oklahoma
7 Roethlisberger, Ben	QB	6-5	240	36	15	Miami (Ohio)

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
62 Cheek, Joseph	T	6-7	311	25	1	Texas A&M
60 Collins, Parker	C	6-3	295	24	1	Appalachian State
66 DeCastro, David	G	6-5	316	28	7	Stanford
71 Feiler, Matt	T	6-6	330	26	2	Bloomsburg
67 Finney, B.J.	C/G	6-4	318	26	3	Kansas State
73 Foster, Ramon	G	6-5	328	32	10	Tennessee
77 Gilbert, Marcus	T	6-6	330	30	8	Florida
61 Graham, Larson	T	6-5	292	24	1	Duquesne
65 Hawkins, Jerald	T	6-6	305	24	3	LSU
53 Pouncey, Maurkice	C	6-4	304	29	9	Florida
78 Villanueva, Alejandro	T	6-9	320	29	4	Army West Point

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
26 Bell, Le'Veon	RB	6-1	225	26	6	Michigan State
30 Conner, James	RB	6-1	233	23	2	Pittsburgh
45 Nix, Roosevelt	FB	5-11	248	26	4	Kent State
22 Ridley, Stevan	RB	5-11	220	29	6	LSU
39 Summers, James	RB	6-3	210	24	1	East Carolina
33 Toussaint, Fitzgerald	RB	5-9	204	28	5	Michigan

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
84 Brown, Antonio	WR	5-10	181	30	9	Central Michigan
15 Griffey, Trey	WR	6-3	192	24	1	Arizona
85 Grimble, Xavier	TE	6-4	261	25	3	USC
88 Heyward-Bey, Darrius	WR	6-2	210	31	10	Maryland
11 Hunter, Justin	WR	6-4	203	27	6	Tennessee
81 James, Jesse	TE	6-7	261	24	4	Penn State
14 Jones, Tevin	WR	6-2	225	25	1	Memphis
89 McDonald, Vance	TE	6-4	267	28	6	Rice
80 McGee, Jake	TE	6-5	250	26	1	Florida
19 Smith-Schuster, JuJu	WR	6-1	215	21	2	USC
13 Thomas, Justin	WR	5-11	185	24	1	Georgia Tech
16 Tucker, Marcus	WR	5-10	190	26	1	Northern Michigan

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
94 Alualu, Tyson	DE	6-3	304	31	9	California
79 Hargrave, Javon	DT	6-2	305	25	3	South Carolina State
95 Hooks, Lavon	DE	6-3	312	26	1	Ole Miss
97 Heyward, Cameron	DE	6-5	295	29	8	Ohio State
49 Leslie, Darnell	DE	6-2	235	24	1	Monmouth
93 McCullers, Daniel	DT	6-7	352	26	5	Tennessee
Sayles, Casey	DT	6-3	289	23	1	Ohio
91 Tuitt, Stephon	DE	6-6	303	25	5	Notre Dame
96 Walton, L.T.	DE	6-5	305	26	4	Central Michigan

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
99 Adams, Keion	LB	6-2	245	23	1	Western Michigan
51 Bostic, Jon	LB	6-1	246	27	6	Florida
56 Chickillo, Anthony	LB	6-3	255	25	4	Miami (Fla.)
48 Dupree, Bud	LB	6-4	269	25	4	Kentucky
54 Fort, L.J.	LB	6-0	232	28	4	Northern Iowa
40 Galambos, Matt	LB	6-1	239	23	1	Pittsburgh
41 Huguenin, Farrington	LB	6-4	268	26	1	Kentucky
46 Kelsey, Keith	LB	6-0	233	23	1	Louisville
44 Matakevich, Tyler	LB	6-1	235	25	3	Temple
50 Shazier, Ryan	LB	6-1	230	26	5	Ohio State
90 Watt, T.J.	LB	6-4	252	23	2	Wisconsin
98 Williams, Vince	LB	6-1	233	28	6	Florida State

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
29 Allen, Brian	CB	6-3	215	24	2	Utah
31 Berhe, Nat	S	5-11	195	27	5	San Diego State
42 Burnett, Morgan	S	6-1	209	29	9	Georgia Tech
25 Burns, Artie	CB	6-0	197	23	3	Miami (Fla.)
37 Dangerfield, Jordan	S	5-11	199	27	2	Towson
21 Davis, Sean	S	6-1	202	24	3	Maryland
39 Golden, Malik	S	6-0	205	25	1	Penn State
23 Haden, Joe	CB	5-11	195	29	9	Florida
28 Hilton, Mike	CB	5-9	184	24	2	Ole Miss
35 Phillips, Dashaun	CB	5-11	186	27	3	Tarleton State
24 Sensabaugh, Coty	CB	5-11	187	29	7	Clemson
20 Sutton, Cameron	CB	5-11	188	23	2	Tennessee
27 Wilcox, J.J.	S	6-0	212	27	6	Georgia Southern

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4 Berry, Jordan	P	6-5	195	27	4	Eastern Kentucky
9 Boswell, Chris	K	6-2	185	27	4	Rice
57 Canaday, Kameron	LS	6-4	245	26	3	Portland State
6 Wile, Matt	P	6-2	215	26	2	Michigan

CINCINNATI
BENGALS

Joe Mixon, RB

MIXON: KEITH SRAKOCIC / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	**Week 2**	**Week 3**	**Week 4**	**Week 5**	**Week 6**	**Week 7**	**Week 8**
@ Indianapolis	Baltimore	@ Carolina	@ Atlanta	Miami	Pittsburgh	@ Kansas City	Tampa Bay
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 13 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM

Bengals hope influx of new assistants gives the stale Marvin Lewis Era a boost

BY JAY MORRISON
Dayton (Ohio) Daily News

It's been nearly two decades since the winds of change have blown through Cincinnati, leaving the Marvin Lewis Era churning in place atop a city that hasn't cheered a playoff victory since 1991.

Lewis enters his 16th season with a new two-year contract after adding back-to-back losing seasons to a resume that features no playoff wins in seven appearances and eight non-playoff seasons.

The hope ownership is clinging to this year is that changes around Lewis will kick up enough momentum to push the Bengals in a new direction.

The team added six new assistant coaches in the offseason, and both the offense (Bill Lazor) and defense (Teryl Austin) will be under different coordinators in this year's season opener.

But the top end of the roster looks the same with 10 starters returning on both offense and defense. Star linebacker Vontaze Burfict will begin the season on the suspended list for the third year in a row, this time missing four games due to a failed drug test.

The roster reboot in 2011 resulted in five consecutive playoff appearances. The Bengals are banking that the staff shuffling will produce similar results.

OFFENSE

The Bengals finished last in total offense and 26th in scoring offense last year, but bringing Lazor back after a 15-week trial was the right thing to do after ownership extended Lewis.

Lazor will finally get a chance to install his offense rather than working in tweaks and wrinkles to the Ken Zampese system following Zampese's Week Two firing in 2017.

Look for Lazor to simplify things in terms of language and play volume. There will be a greater focus on a running game that was one of the best in the league over the final six weeks when the Bengals switched to a more basic, power approach that suited rookie back Joe Mixon.

QUARTERBACKS: The Bengals remain all-in on Andy Dalton, as evidenced by the team letting backup AJ McCarron leave in free agency and not addressing the position until the seventh round of the draft.

Dalton enters his seventh season with three years left on the six-year, $96 million extension he signed prior to 2014.

He's coming off a season in which he produced his second-lowest completion percentage and second-lowest yardage total. But those numbers were more a result of a disappointing offensive line than any apparent decline in skills.

PREDICTED FINISH AFC NORTH: 2

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Andy Dalton
	Matt Barkley
RB	Joe Mixon
	Giovani Bernard
LT	Cordy Glenn
	Cedric Ogbuehi
LG	Clint Boling
	Alex Redmond
C	Billy Price
	T.J. Johnson
RG	Trey Hopkins
	Christian Westerman
RT	Jake Fisher
	Bobby Hart
TE	Tyler Eifert
	Tyler Kroft
WR	A.J. Green
	Tyler Boyd
WR	Brandon LaFell
	John Ross
WR	Alex Erickson
	Josh Malone

DEFENSE

DE	Carlos Dunlap
	Jordan Willis
DT	Geno Atkins
	Ryan Glasgow
DT	Andrew Billings
	Chris Baker
DE	Carl Lawson
	Michael Johnson
SLB	Nick Vigil
	Jordan Evans
MLB	Preston Brown
	Vincent Rey
WLB	Vontaze Burfict
	Jordan Evans
CB	Dre Kirkpatrick
	Darqueze Dennard
CB	William Jackson III
	KeiVarae Russell
SS	Shawn Williams
	Clayton Fejedelem
FS	George Iloka
	Jessie Bates

SPECIALISTS

LS	Clark Harris
P	Kevin Huber
K	Randy Bullock
KR	Alex Erickson
PR	Darius Phillips

BYE: WEEK 9 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17
New Orleans	@ Baltimore	Cleveland	Denver	@ L.A. Chargers	Oakland	@ Cleveland	@ Pittsburgh
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

CINCINNATI **BENGALS**

Andy Dalton, QB

↘ **5-YEAR WIN TREND**
46-32-2
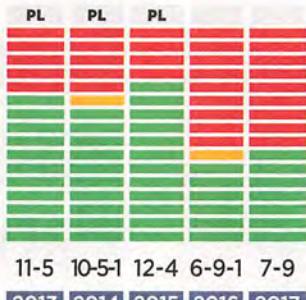
PL	PL	PL		

11-5	10-5-1	12-4	6-9-1	7-9
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

Dalton has a strong relationship with Lazor, who was his quarterbacks coach in 2016 and 2017 before the change at coordinator. The Bengals filled Lazor's vacancy as quarterbacks coach this offseason with Alex Van Pelt, who coached Aaron Rodgers in Green Bay the last four years.

The team also signed veteran Matt Barkley to compete for the backup job with Jeff Driskel, whom the Bengals are high enough on that they kept three quarterbacks on the roster in 2016 and were considering doing the same last year before Driskel suffered a thumb injury in the preseason and went on injured reserve.

RUNNING BACKS: Eased into a role last year as a rookie, Mixon is positioned as the primary back in 2018. The former Oklahoma star had some struggles early last year but really found his footing down the stretch, averaging at least 4.0 yards per carry in each of the last four games after hitting that mark just three times through the first 10 contests.

The Bengals finished 31st in rushing last year, but their 4.6-yard average per carry over the final six weeks was sixth best with Giovani Bernard settling into the complementary back role where he excels.

The team also plucked Brian Hill off the Atlanta practice squad once Jeremy Hill elected to have season-ending ankle surgery, and the undrafted rookie showed some flashes down the stretch as the reworked run game got rolling.

The team also returns 2016 undrafted free agent Tra Carson, who will push Hill for the third spot after missing all of last year with an ankle injury.

RECEIVERS: Rarely does the word "only" precede a stat line of 75 catches, 1,078 yards and eight touchdowns, but 2017 was a disappointment for Pro Bowl receiver A.J. Green.

Green is looking for redemption after he had an usually high number of drops last season, several of which resulted in interceptions, and he admits he lost focus at times as the Bengals wallowed through a second consecutive losing campaign.

Also looking to bounce back is 2017 first-round pick John Ross after injuries limited him to 17 snaps and no receptions last year. Redemption is on the mind of Tyler Boyd as well since his numbers fell off after leading the NFL in third-down receptions as a rookie in 2016.

The biggest question is who starts opposite Green. Heading into training camp the job belongs to veteran Brandon LaFell, but he will turn 32 in November and could be a roster casualty with so many younger options available. Those options include last year's fourth-round pick, Josh Malone, and third-year players Cody Core and Alex Erickson, each of whom has added value as key players on special teams.

At tight end it could be a case of "now you see them, now you don't," as Tyler Eifert, Tyler Kroft and C.J. Uzomah will all be free agents in 2019. The oft-injured Eifert took an incentive-laden free-agent deal to return to the team that used a first-round pick on him in 2013, only to see the former Notre Dame standout play 39 of a possible 80 games.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The Bengals

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Bengals

"The main thing the Bengals need to do is revamp that offensive line, which they're in the process of doing. It was one of the worst in the league last year. There's going to be an influx of new talent and new techniques with (new offensive line coach) Frank Pollack there now. I look for them to attack the line of scrimmage a lot more, set up a little shorter and take people on quicker. ... In today's NFL, backs that can not only run it, but catch it and hurt you in space as receivers, that's what everybody's looking for. The Bengals have two of them. **(Giovani) Bernard** can do it and so can (Joe) Mixon. They have plenty of weapons, but it all starts with that offensive line and whether they can improve that and change what they're doing up front."

⟍ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	0-20	Baltimore Ravens
09/14	L	9-13	Houston Texans
09/24	L	24-27	Green Bay Packers
10/01	W	31-7	Cleveland Browns
10/08	W	20-16	Buffalo Bills
10/22	L	14-29	Pittsburgh Steelers
10/29	W	24-23	Indianapolis Colts
11/05	L	7-23	Jacksonville Jaguars
11/12	L	20-24	Tennessee Titans
11/19	W	20-17	Denver Broncos
11/26	W	30-16	Cleveland Browns
12/04	L	20-23	Pittsburgh Steelers
12/10	L	7-33	Chicago Bears
12/17	L	7-34	Minnesota Vikings
12/24	W	26-17	Detroit Lions
12/31	W	31-27	Baltimore Ravens

2017 RECORD: 7-9

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Mixon	178	626	3.5	25	4
Bernard	105	458	4.4	25	2
Dalton	38	99	2.6	25	0
J. Hill	37	116	3.1	13	0
B. Hill	11	37	3.4	11	0
Erickson	5	16	3.2	14	0
Malone	2	2	1.0	4	0
Ross	1	12	12.0	12	0
CINCINNATI	377	1,366	3.6	25	6
OPPONENTS	489	2,046	4.2	49t	13

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Green	75	1,078	14.4	77t	8
LaFell	52	548	10.5	45	3
Bernard	43	389	9.0	61t	2
Kroft	42	404	9.6	59	7
Mixon	30	287	9.6	67	0
Boyd	22	225	10.2	49t	2
Erickson	12	180	15.0	37	1
Uzomah	10	92	9.2	21	1
Malone	6	63	10.5	25t	1
Eifert	4	46	11.5	22	0
J. Hill	4	16	4.0	10	0
B. Hill	2	36	18.0	34	0
Hewitt	2	22	11.0	16	0
CINCINNATI	304	3,386	11.1	77t	25
OPPONENTS	336	3,657	10.9	72	20

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Dalton	496	297	3,320	25	12
McCarron	14	7	66	0	0
CINCINNATI	510	304	3,122	25	12
OPPONENTS	561	336	3,379	20	11

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Erickson	32	663	20.7	41	0
Bernard	1	7	7.0	7	0
Carter	1	0	0.0	0	0
CINCINNATI	34	670	19.7	41	0
OPPONENTS	35	811	23.2	87	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Erickson	39	278	7.1	29	0
Jones	6	131	21.8	40	0
Dennard	1	0	0.0	0	0
Jackson	1	0	0.0	0	0
CINCINNATI	47	409	8.7	40	0
OPPONENTS	43	410	9.5	63t	1

SACKS	CINCINNATI 41.0, OPPONENTS 40.0

Atkins 9.0, Lawson 8.5, Dunlap 7.5, Johnson 5.0, C. Smith 3.0, Dennard 2.0, Burfict 1.5, Jackson 1.0, Kirkpatrick 1.0, Vigil 1.0, Willis 1.0, Sims 0.5

⟍ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	280.5	32
Rushing	85.4	31
Passing	195.1	27
Scoring	18.1	26
Punt returns	8.7	14
Kick returns	19.7	26
Red zone TD%	55.8	11
Total defense	339.1	18
Against rush	127.9	30
Against pass	211.2	8
Points allowed	21.8	16
Interceptions	11	20t
Sacks	41.0	11t
Turnover diff.	-9	27

made two trades to address the offensive line this offseason, obtaining tackle Cordy Glenn from Buffalo in addition to swapping coaches with the Cowboys, with Frank Pollack coming to Cincinnati and Paul Alexander ending a 23-year run in Cincinnati to go to Dallas.

The unit struggled in both pass protection and run blocking last year, leading to a last-place finish in total offense for Cincinnati. But the Bengals continued to upgrade their most glaring weakness by drafting center Billy Price in the first round to fill the hole left by Russell Bodine's free-agent departure to Buffalo.

Clint Boling is solid at left guard with 90 starts the last six seasons, while Trey Hopkins returns at right guard after his first year as a starter.

The biggest question is at right tackle, where there will be an open competition in camp among 2015 first-round pick Cedric Ogbuehi, 2015 second-round pick Jake Fisher and free-agent pickup Bobby Hart.

DEFENSE

New coordinator Austin's arrival marks the biggest change to the Bengals' defensive scheme since 2008 when Mike Zimmer installed a system that Austin's predecessor, Paul Guenther, carried on the last four years.

Lewis and Austin spent the offseason talking about the need to create more turnovers, something the Bengals rarely did the last few seasons, finishing tied for 30th in takeaways in 2017 and tied for last in fumble recoveries in 2016.

The Bengals will remain a 4-3 defense under Austin, but look for more aggression, more blitzing and more man coverage.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Carl Lawson burst onto the scene as a rookie last year to give the Bengals the edge rusher they've been looking for opposite Carlos Dunlap, but doubt remains whether Lawson, who had 8.5 sacks in 2017, can be an every-down player.

Lawson's emergence plus the addition of Jordan Willis in the third round last year and Sam Hubbard in the third this year could spell the end of Michael Johnson's run in Cincinnati. The 10-year veteran seemed rejuvenated by his role as inside rusher in nickel situations last year, and Lewis loves to keep veterans around, sometimes a year or two too long.

Pro Bowl defensive tackle Geno Atkins continues to be one of the top interior linemen in the league, but the Bengals are still searching for a run-plugging specialist to line up alongside him. Andrew Billings, who missed his rookie season in 2016 with

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Cincinnati head coach Marvin Lewis

Lewis rapidly rebuilt the Bengals from a laughingstock to respectable, but the results have plateaued and it has never felt as though there was an urgency, on his part or ownership's, to change that. His conservative, low-risk, low-reward style has kept him in lock-step with an old-school owner, but it has long since worn thin with the fanbase. A larger staff of assistants and less reliance on aging veterans past their prime—several of which the team cut ties with in the offseason—were the first signs of change. But it's going to take more to change perceptions and results.

CINCINNATI **BENGALS**

a knee injury, struggled in the role last year. Rookie fifth-rounder Andrew Brown and 2017 fourth-rounder Ryan Glasgow are other options.

LINEBACKERS: An already-thin group will be further depleted the first four games with Burfict suspended. The Bengals added a veteran free agent on a one-year contract for the fourth year in a row: Preston Brown, the NFL's leading tackler in 2017, followed the path of failed previous experiments with Kevin Minter, Karlos Dansby and A.J. Hawk.

The jury is still out on Nick Vigil, whose first season as a starter ended prematurely with ankle and back injuries, while versatile veteran Vincent Rey will be 31 when the season begins.

The Bengals drafted Texas Longhorn Malik Jefferson with the No. 78 pick, the highest they've taken a linebacker since 2011. He can play all three spots and could be the season-opening starter while Burfict sits.

Employing mostly nickel sets and the likelihood of more dime looks under Austin, the Bengals can get by with a lack of depth if Burfict can stay healthy and out of trouble once he returns.

SECONDARY: William Jackson's emergence as one of the top corners in the game in his first season made Adam Jones expendable and the Bengals

declined his club option. They still have two other first-round corners in Dre Kirkpatrick, who will start opposite Jackson, and Darqueze Dennard in the slot. However, that didn't stop them from targeting the secondary in the draft with a second-round safety in Jessie Bates and a pair of fifth-round corners in Davontae Harris and Darius Phillips.

Even though the Bengals gave safeties Shawn Williams and George Iloka hefty extensions two years ago, they were openly searching for an upgrade this offseason, taking a run at Kurt Coleman before he signed with New Orleans in addition to being the first team to bring Eric Reid in for a visit.

They hope Bates can at least play in three-safety sets, if not push Iloka for the starting job. The rest of the corners and safeties are late-rounders or undrafted guys without any significant snaps under their belts.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Improving their special teams, which were miserable in 2017, was a key factor in how the Bengals attacked the second and third days of the draft.

Last year, Cincinnati allowed a blocked field goal and a blocked punt, surrendered a punt-return touchdown and had a return touchdown of their own negated by a penalty. It was an

The Bengals filled their gaping hole at left tackle by trading for **Cordy Glenn**. If his level of play is around the average of what he showed in six seasons with Buffalo, the Bengals should be dangerous again.

uncharacteristically poor campaign for assistant coach Darrin Simmons' group, due in large part to a season-long rash of injuries forcing marginal players into action.

Punter Kevin Huber returns for a 10th season after signing a two-year extension, and kicker Randy Bullock is back after winning an open competition against Jake Elliott, who caught on with the Eagles and won the Super Bowl.

Bullock was a reliable 18-for-20 on field goals last season after a shaky 2016, and Huber posted a 46.6-yard average, tying the second-highest mark of his career. Putting more solid pieces around those two is a top priority.

BOTTOM LINE

Cincinnati's roster is talented enough to get back to the playoffs, but everything hinges on fixing the offensive line, which was the primary focus this offseason.

New offensive and defensive coordinators should be enough to kick-start the franchise, which has been in a tailspin since the devastating AFC wild-card meltdown against Pittsburgh in the 2015 season.

The reason owner Mike Brown brought Lewis back was because he felt the team is closer to getting to a Super Bowl with Lewis in charge than it would be by blowing up everything and starting anew. It shouldn't take long to find out whether that decision will be rewarded or rued.

2018 TEAM GRADE: **B**
2018 STOCKWATCH: **OUTPERFORM**

THE LAST TIME ...

... a rookie led the AFC in quarterback rating was 1969 when first-round draft pick **Greg Cook** did it for the Bengals. Selected fifth overall out of the University of Cincinnati, Cook was spectacular in throwing for 1,854 yards and 15 touchdowns with an 88.3 rating in just 11 games. Unfortunately, it would be Cook's only season as a starter, as he went down with an undiagnosed torn rotator cuff in his third game and, amazingly, returned to the lineup in Week Seven with the help of cortisone shots while playing in pain. He was operated on following the season, when it was also revealed that he had a partially detached biceps muscle. He was never the same again. After three failed operations, he retired, but made a comeback attempt with the Bengals in 1973, playing a single game and completing one of three passes before leaving the NFL for good.

⭘ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **LB** Preston Brown
  (free agent, Buffalo)
- **DT** Chris Baker
  (free agent, Tampa Bay)
- **OT** Cordy Glenn
  (trade, Buffalo)
- **QB** Matt Barkley
  (free agent, Arizona)
- **OT** Bobby Hart
  (free agent, N.Y. Giants)

Chris Baker

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

2018 DRAFT GRADE
B
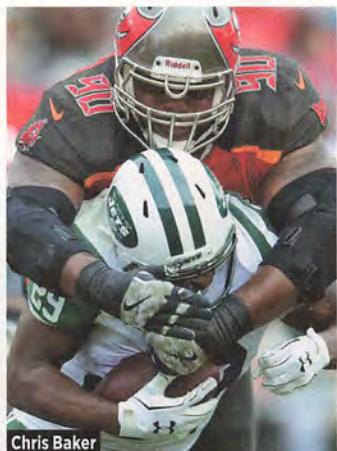
The Bengals married need and value in the first round by grabbing a starting center in **Billy Price** and added key pieces at each level of the defense with their next three picks. Safety Jessie Bates, defensive end Sam Hubbard and linebacker Malik Jefferson should all have impact roles as rookies. But the team failed to get another offensive tackle despite not having a solid starting option on the right side. And the fourth-round grab of running back Mark Walton could prove to be an expensive reach if Joe Mixon and Giovani Bernard stay healthy.

⭘ THE BENGALS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	21	Billy Price	C	6-4	312	22	Ohio State
2	54	Jessie Bates	DB	6-2	195	21	Wake Forest
3	77	Sam Hubbard	DE	6-5	265	21	Ohio State
3	78	Malik Jefferson	LB	6-3	240	21	Texas
4	112	Mark Walton	RB	5-10	195	21	Miami (Fla.)
5	151	Davontae Harris	CB	6-2	200	23	Illinois State
5	158	Andrew Brown	DT	6-4	285	22	Virginia
5	170	Darius Phillips	CB	5-10	179	22	Western Michigan
7	249	Logan Woodside	QB	6-1	213	23	Toledo
7	252	Rod Taylor	G	6-3	320	23	Ole Miss
7	253	Auden Tate	WR	6-5	228	21	Florida State

⭘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Marvin Lewis, **Head Coach;** Bill Lazor, **Offensive Coordinator;** Teryl Austin, **Defensive Coordinator;** Darrin Simmons, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
7 Barkley, Matt	QB	6-2	227	28	6	USC
14 Dalton, Andy	QB	6-2	220	30	8	TCU
6 Driskel, Jeff	QB	6-4	231	25	2	Louisiana Tech

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
65 Boling, Clint	G	6-5	305	29	8	Georgia
74 Fisher, Jake	T	6-6	305	25	4	Oregon
77 Glenn, Cordy	T	6-6	345	28	7	Georgia
68 Hart, Bobby	T/G	6-5	334	24	4	Florida State
66 Hopkins, Trey	G/C	6-3	310	26	3	Texas
60 Johnson, T.J.	C	6-4	300	28	5	South Carolina
79 Leamon, Javarius	T	6-7	332	25	1	South Carolina State
72 Murray, Justin	T	6-5	304	25	1	Cincinnati
70 Ogbuehi, Cedric	T	6-5	310	26	4	Texas A&M
67 Omoile, Oni	G	6-3	305	25	1	Iowa State
76 Perkins, Kent	T	6-5	320	23	1	Texas
62 Redmond, Alex	G	6-5	310	23	2	UCLA
63 Westerman, Christian	G	6-3	300	25	3	Arizona State

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
25 Bernard, Giovani	RB	5-9	205	26	6	North Carolina
33 Carson, Tra	RB	5-11	231	25	2	Texas A&M
82 Carter, Cethan	HB	6-3	241	25	2	Nebraska
23 Hill, Brian	RB	6-1	219	22	2	Wyoming
28 Mixon, Joe	RB	6-1	228	22	2	Oklahoma
39 Williams, Jarveon	RB	5-9	205	23	1	UTSA

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
83 Boyd, Tyler	WR	6-2	197	23	3	Pittsburgh
16 Core, Cody	WR	6-3	210	24	3	Ole Miss
12 Erickson, Alex	WR	6-0	195	25	3	Wisconsin
85 Eifert, Tyler	TE	6-6	255	28	6	Notre Dame
18 Green, A.J.	WR	6-4	210	30	8	Georgia
89 Hewitt, Ryan	HB	6-4	255	27	5	Stanford
81 Kroft, Tyler	TE	6-6	250	25	4	Rutgers
11 LaFell, Brandon	WR	6-3	210	31	9	LSU
80 Malone, Josh	WR	6-3	208	22	2	Tennessee
84 Orndoff, Scott	TE	6-5	256	24	1	Pittsburgh
15 Ross, John	WR	5-11	188	23	2	Washington
86 Schreck, Mason	TE	6-5	258	24	1	Buffalo
87 Uzomah, C.J.	TE	6-6	265	25	4	Auburn
17 Whitfield, Kermit	WR	5-8	184	24	1	Florida State

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
97 Atkins, Geno	DT	6-1	300	30	9	Georgia
92 Baker, Chris	DT	6-2	320	30	7	Hampton
99 Billings, Andrew	DT	6-1	325	23	3	Baylor
96 Dunlap, Carlos	DE	6-6	280	29	9	Florida
98 Glasgow, Ryan	DT	6-3	302	24	2	Michigan
90 Johnson, Michael	DE	6-7	272	31	10	Georgia Tech
58 Lawson, Carl	DE/LB	6-2	261	23	2	Auburn
68 Tupou, Josh	DT	6-3	350	24	2	Colorado
69 Williams, DeShawn	DT	6-1	295	25	2	Clemson
75 Willis, Jordan	DE	6-4	255	23	2	Kansas State

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
51 Bell, Brandon	LB	6-1	230	23	1	Penn State
53 Bradford, Carl	LB	6-1	248	26	3	Arizona State
52 Brown, Preston	LB	6-1	251	25	5	Louisville
55 Burfict, Vontaze	LB	6-1	255	27	7	Arizona State
50 Evans, Jordan	LB	6-2	233	23	2	Oklahoma
47 Harris, Connor	LB	6-0	243	25	1	Lindenwood
56 Nickerson, Hardy	LB	6-0	232	24	2	Illinois
57 Rey, Vincent	LB	6-0	250	31	8	Duke
59 Vigil, Nick	LB	6-2	239	25	3	Utah State

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
21 Dennard, Darqueze	CB	5-11	198	26	5	Michigan State
42 Fejedelem, Clayton	S	6-0	205	25	3	Illinois
43 Iloka, George	S	6-4	225	28	7	Boise State
22 Jackson III, William	CB	6-0	187	25	3	Houston
27 Kirkpatrick, Dre	CB	6-2	185	28	7	Alabama
29 McRae, Tony	CB	5-10	185	25	2	North Carolina A&T
20 Russell, KeiVarae	CB	5-11	196	24	3	Notre Dame
26 Shaw, Josh	CB	6-1	200	26	4	USC
23 Shelton, Sojourn	CB	5-9	168	23	1	Wisconsin
37 Therezie, Robenson	S	5-9	212	27	3	Auburn
36 Williams, Shawn	S	6-0	210	27	6	Georgia
40 Wilson, Brandon	S	5-11	200	24	2	Houston

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
7 Brown, Jonathan	K	5-10	197	25	1	Louisville
4 Bullock, Randy	K	5-9	206	28	7	Texas A&M
46 Harris, Clark	LS	6-5	250	34	10	Rutgers
10 Huber, Kevin	P	6-1	211	33	10	Cincinnati

BALTIMORE
RAVENS

Joe Flacco, QB

FLACCO: NICK WASS / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Buffalo	@ Cincinnati	Denver	@ Pittsburgh	@ Cleveland	@ Tennessee	New Orleans	@ Carolina
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 13 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 21 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM

As per usual of late, Ravens are lacking impact players on the offensive side

BY MIKE PRESTON
Baltimore Sun

3
PREDICTED FINISH **AFC NORTH**

Ravens owner Steve Bisciotti didn't issue an ultimatum at the end of last season but the message was delivered.

When asked if head coach John Harbaugh had to get into the postseason in 2018 to save his job, Bisciotti said he didn't want to put that type of pressure on Harbaugh. But minutes later he said he thought about firing Harbaugh after the Ravens lost to Cincinnati in the 2017 season finale and failed to clinch a playoff berth for the fourth time in five years.

It can't happen again.

It's safe to assume that Harbaugh's contract would have been terminated except that Ozzie Newsome is going to step down as general manager following this season. So, if Bisciotti is going to blow up his team he might as well do it once instead of twice, and allow Newsome's replacement, Eric DeCosta, to have an input on possibly hiring a new coach.

Bisciotti is also showing loyalty. Newsome has been running the organization since the Browns moved from Cleveland to Baltimore in 1996 and, despite recent problems, the Ravens won Super Bowls in 2000 and 2012.

Harbaugh has produced the fourth-most total NFL victories (104) since he became the head coach in 2008 and has earned six playoff berths. But the NFL is a "what have you done for me lately" league and Harbaugh's resume isn't as impressive.

And time is running out.

OFFENSE

Technically speaking, the Ravens run a West Coast offense that is predicated on short, timing passes, but it usually becomes a hodgepodge operation. Translation: Whatever works, the Ravens will stay with it. During the offseason the Ravens have emphasized speed, which means they want to throw downfield more often and build up one of the worst passing offenses in the NFL. But they also want to get their running backs more involved in the passing game to provide quarterback Joe Flacco with more check-down options.

QUARTERBACKS: Flacco, an 11-year veteran, hasn't played well the past three years and has been plagued by injuries in two of them. A knee injury forced him to miss the final six games of the 2015 season and a back problem caused him to get off to a slow start in the first half of 2017. The coaching staff and fans are getting anxious for Flacco to step up and take charge of this offense in 2018. Harbaugh has criticized him recently for not working with receivers more during the offseason. Flacco has always struggled

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Joe Flacco
	Robert Griffin III
RB	Alex Collins
	Javorius Allen
LT	Ronnie Stanley
	James Hurst
LG	Alex Lewis
	Nico Siragusa
C	Matt Skura
	Jermaine Eluemunor
RG	Marshal Yanda
	Maurquice Shakir
RT	James Hurst
	Orlando Brown
TE	Hayden Hurst
	Nick Boyle
WR	Michael Crabtree
	Breshad Perriman
WR	John Brown
	Chris Moore
WR	Willie Snead IV
	Quincy Adeboyejo

DEFENSE
DT	Brandon Williams
	Willie Henry
NT	Michael Pierce
	Chris Wormley
DE	Brent Urban
	Carl Davis
OLB	Terrell Suggs
	Za'Darius Smith
ILB	C.J. Mosley
	Kamalei Correa
ILB	Matthew Judon
	Tyus Bowser
OLB	Patrick Onwuasor
	Tyus Bowser
CB	Jimmy Smith
	Brandon Carr
CB	Marlon Humphrey
	Maurice Canady
SS	Tony Jefferson
	Anthony Levine Sr.
FS	Eric Weddle
	Chuck Clark

SPECIALISTS
LS	Morgan Cox
P	Sam Koch
K	Justin Tucker
KR	Chris Moore
PR	Willie Snead IV

BYE: WEEK 10 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Game may be flexed to Saturday, Dec. 22.

Week 9	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Pittsburgh	Cincinnati	Oakland	@ Atlanta	@ Kansas City	Tampa Bay	@ L.A. Chargers	Cleveland
Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23* / TBD*	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

BALTIMORE **RAVENS**

Terrell Suggs, LB

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
40-40

PL

8-8	10-6	5-11	8-8	9-7
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**
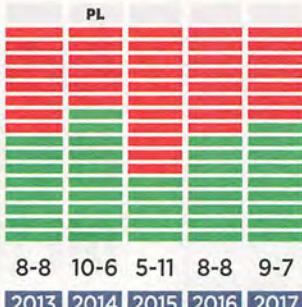
PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

with mechanics so the Ravens went out and hired him a quarterbacks coach. They also added more speedy receivers. The question is if Flacco is just a quarterback showing the signs of age in the twilight of his career or one that just needed a makeover in terms of his receivers and a personal coach. Regardless, 2018 will be a major year in Flacco's career in Baltimore.

RUNNING BACKS: The Ravens found their running back of the future, or at least for 2018, shortly after last season when they signed unrestricted free agent Alex Collins to a contract. Collins became the eventual starter and rushed for 973 yards on 212 carries despite starting only 12 games. Collins has great explosion and game-breaking ability. It will be interesting to see how his 210-pound body holds up as a full-time starter. He seemed to tire at the end of last season. The Ravens have a steady backup in Javorius Allen. He doesn't have the flash or speed of Collins, but is more direct and powerful. Look for the Ravens to use Allen more in passing situations coming out of the backfield instead of Collins. The Ravens, though, still need a better third-down passing threat. They haven't had that type of complete back or threat since Ray Rice was cut in 2014 following a domestic abuse incident.

RECEIVERS: Newsome said he wanted to change the faces of the receivers in the film room from a year ago and he did it. Gone are Mike Wallace, Jeremy Maclin and Benjamin Watson. The new guys are Michael Crabtree, John Brown and Willie Snead IV. It's an upgrade because the talent from a year ago was so poor. Crabtree will be the No. 1 receiver. He has decent size, speed, good hands and can make the catch in traffic. He won't be the team's only possession receiver. Snead will be in the slot. He didn't put up good numbers last season with the Saints, but his style is comparable to Crabtree's. He has one major problem: Snead isn't physical and has problems getting off of press coverage. Brown will be the speed guy but he has had problems holding on to the ball. That's been a familiar problem in Baltimore the last couple of years, especially with Breshad Perriman, the team's top draft pick in 2015. The Ravens selected tight end Hayden Hurst in the first round of this year's draft and he'll be a target over the middle and inside the red zone for Flacco.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The team should be stronger here than in recent seasons. It will come down to starting guards Marshal Yanda and Alex Lewis returning from season-ending injuries a year ago. Yanda had major ankle surgery last season that forced him to miss the final 14 games.

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Ravens

"The Ravens have a good organization and a solid team but they lack playmakers. It's been that way for two or three years. Joe Flacco has been a good quarterback throughout most of his career but is now on the downside after 10 or 11 years in the league. The front office has given him few weapons. They've given him veteran receivers who are on the decline like Steve Smith, Mike Wallace and Benjamin Watson. It's a little better on the defensive side of the ball, but who on that side do you have to gameplan for? Defensive tackle **Brandon Williams** is good, but not a complete player as far as getting pressure on the quarterback. C.J. Mosley is good, but not a dominant player. They don't have playmakers, which is why their defense has failed them late in the season for the past two years. Offensively, they don't have anyone who puts fear in a defense, not one player you really have to gameplan for. Until that changes, the Ravens will be an average or slightly average team. In this league, impact players take over games late in the fourth quarter and in the postseason. The Ravens need a few."

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	20-0	Cincinnati Bengals
09/17	W	24-10	Cleveland Browns
09/24	L	7-44	Jacksonville Jaguars
10/01	L	9-26	Pittsburgh Steelers
10/08	W	30-17	Oakland Raiders
10/15	L	24-27	Chicago Bears
10/22	L	16-24	Minnesota Vikings
10/26	W	40-0	Miami Dolphins
11/05	L	20-23	Tennessee Titans
11/19	W	23-0	Green Bay Packers
11/27	W	23-16	Houston Texans
12/03	W	44-20	Detroit Lions
12/10	L	38-39	Pittsburgh Steelers
12/17	W	27-10	Cleveland Browns
12/23	W	23-16	Indianapolis Colts
12/31	L	27-31	Cincinnati Bengals

2017 RECORD: 9-7

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Collins	212	973	4.6	50	6
Allen	153	591	3.9	37	4
West	39	138	3.5	13	2
Flacco	25	54	2.2	25	1
Woodhead	14	56	4.0	10	0
Campanaro	5	42	8.4	19	0
Mallett	4	-3	-0.8	0	0
Williams	2	6	3.0	4	0
Mayle	2	2	1.0	2t	1
Moore	2	-9	-4.5	-4	0
Wallace	1	4	4.0	4	0
Rainey	1	2	2.0	2	0
BALTIMORE	**460**	**1,856**	**4.0**	**50**	**14**
OPPONENTS	**435**	**1,780**	**4.1**	**59**	**12**

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Watson	61	522	8.6	33t	4
Wallace	52	748	14.4	66	4
Allen	46	250	5.4	20	2
Maclin	40	440	11.0	48t	3
Woodhead	33	200	6.1	22	0
Boyle	28	203	7.3	16	0
Collins	23	187	8.1	37	0
Campanaro	19	173	9.1	18	1
Moore	18	248	13.8	30t	3
Williams	15	86	5.7	17	1
Perriman	10	77	7.7	14	0
Rainey	5	18	3.6	12	0
Whalen	4	23	5.8	9	0
Ricard	4	12	3.0	6t	2
Matthews	3	25	8.3	12	0
West	2	23	11.5	15	0
BALTIMORE	**363**	**3,235**	**8.9**	**66**	**20**
OPPONENTS	**333**	**3,701**	**11.1**	**57**	**18**

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Flacco	549	352	3,141	18	13
Mallett	16	9	56	2	0
Koch	2	2	38	0	0
BALTIMORE	**567**	**363**	**3,030**	**20**	**13**
OPPONENTS	**569**	**333**	**3,421**	**18**	**22**

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Moore	13	346	26.6	87	0
Rainey	11	338	30.7	96t	1
Campanaro	6	159	26.5	40	0
Collins	2	50	25.0	27	0
Mayle	2	43	21.5	29	0
BALTIMORE	**34**	**936**	**27.5**	**96t**	**1**
OPPONENTS	**33**	**615**	**18.6**	**37**	**0**

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Campanaro	27	291	10.8	77t	1
Rainey	2	22	11.0	13	0
Webb	2	7	3.5	7	0
Whalen	1	2	2.0	2	0
BALTIMORE	**32**	**322**	**10.1**	**77t**	**1**
OPPONENTS	**34**	**277**	**8.1**	**46**	**0**

SACKS — BALTIMORE 41.0, OPPONENTS 27.0

Suggs 11.0, Judon 8.0, Henry 3.5, Smith 3.5, Bowser 3.0, Levine 3.0, Jefferson 2.5, Webb 2.0, Mosley 1.0, Onwuasor 1.0, Pierce 1.0, Weddle 1.0, Davis 0.5

⬐ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	305.4	27
Rushing	116.0	11
Passing	189.4	29
Scoring	24.7	9
Punt returns	10.1	5
Kick returns	27.5	1
Red zone TD%	57.7	9
Total defense	325.1	12
Against rush	111.2	15
Against pass	213.8	10
Points allowed	18.9	6
Interceptions	22	1
Sacks	41.0	11t
Turnover diff.	+17	1

Before then, he had been one of the league's best guards, getting to the second level and knocking opposing players off the ball at the point of attack. Lewis, who will start at left guard, had shown great potential in his rookie campaign but missed all of 2017 with a shoulder injury. Ronnie Stanley, in his third season, is slowly developing into one of the best left tackles in the league. The Ravens have one hole to fill at center where Matt Skura, a former guard, has to replace departed free agent Ryan Jensen. Veteran swingman James Hurst will be solid at right tackle even though he'll struggle with speed rushers. The Ravens have very little depth and will be hurt if the injury bug hits again. Fortunately, they have Greg Roman as the running-game coordinator and his combination, downhill blocking scheme is one of the best in the NFL.

DEFENSE

Don "Wink" Martindale will be the new coordinator replacing Dean Pees, who is now with the Tennessee Titans. The Ravens' scheme will basically remain intact and they'll bring a lot of pressure out of multiple three- and four-man fronts. The big difference will be in verbiage. Martindale wants to simplify terms and make the defense easier to learn. Also, Pees would often try to get pressure with his front four and drop seven into coverage late in the season because he didn't want to gamble. Martindale will stay blitz-happy throughout the year. He'd rather gamble, try something and die than to bleed to death slowly. That's not his style.

DEFENSIVE LINE: The Ravens have eight players in this group who have experience so there will be no problem having a six- or seven-man rotation on game day. Nose tackle Brandon Williams is the best of bunch and one of the best run-stoppers in the NFL. The Ravens, though, need another end or tackle to step up and complement him. Tackle Michael Pierce

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Baltimore head coach John Harbaugh
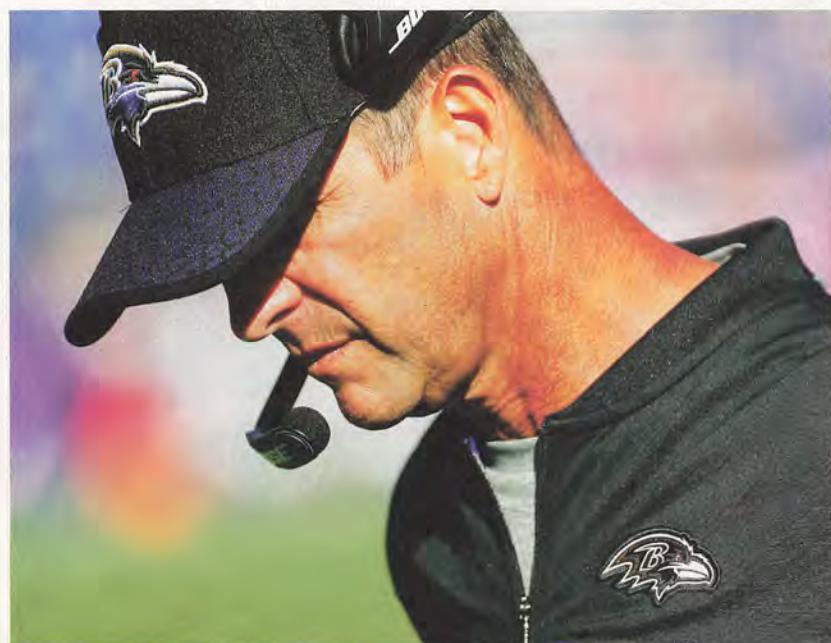
Harbaugh has always tried to attack on both sides of the ball instead of being attacked. He doesn't call it gambling, just being aggressive. During his tenure in Baltimore, he has gone for it a lot in fourth-and-one situations, even in his own territory. On defense, Harbaugh likes to blitz or bring constant pressure, even though he gave in to former coordinator Dean Pees, who was hesitant to blitz as much as Harbaugh liked. That will change this season under Martindale, the team's first-year defensive coordinator. He might blitz even more than Harbaugh prefers. Offensively, Harbaugh's gambles have hurt the Ravens. He wants to be freewheeling like New Orleans coach Sean Payton and New England's Bill Belichick, but they have Drew Brees and Tom Brady, respectively, as their quarterbacks. The Ravens have Flacco, who is a proven winner but not in that class.

BALTIMORE **RAVENS**

showed promise during his rookie season but not much improvement last year. End Brent Urban has played well at times but can't stay healthy for an entire season. Backup tackle Willie Henry played well at the end of last season and the Ravens will give him some time at end because of his speed. Carl Davis and Bronson Kaufusi figure to be in the rotation at end. The biggest improvement needed from this group is providing a pass rush. Getting pressure from the line has been a weakness for several seasons now.

LINEBACKERS: There are a lot of questions surrounding this unit. The Ravens have the players in place but there are concerns about the talent. Veteran outside linebacker Terrell Suggs is always a force early in the season but not much of a factor late in the year when the Ravens are making a playoff push. How much gas does he have left in the tank? C.J. Mosley is one of the better inside linebackers in the league but doesn't have anyone to complement him on the weakside. The Ravens will again have to find answers at that position with Patrick Onwuasor or Kamalei Correa. Matthew Judon will be the strongside linebacker; however, the team needs another pass

rusher besides Suggs. The options are second-year players Tyus Bowser and Tim Williams. Bowser had moments last season but lacked consistency. Williams has to develop more moves than just being a speed rusher on the perimeter.

SECONDARY: The Ravens have some good, young talent, but this group has to mature quickly. If veteran Jimmy Smith recovers fully from a ruptured Achilles tendon, the Ravens have two possible shutdown cornerbacks in Smith and second-year player Marlon Humphrey, the former first-round pick out of Alabama. The Ravens haven't had this type of talent since Duane Starks teamed with Chris McAlister on the Super Bowl-winning team in 2000. The Ravens have three players to shuffle in nickel and dime situations with Brandon Carr, Maurice Canady and Tavon Young. Young might be the most talented of the three but missed all of last season with a knee injury. He is small, though, and will have problems against taller receivers. Baltimore's safeties, Eric Weddle and Tony Jefferson, are good in run support but struggle in pass defense in the deep third of the field. The Ravens also have had problems getting confused in

Michael Crabtree will be the possession-type receiver and red-zone threat the Ravens haven't had in years. He doesn't have exceptional size but runs precise patterns, can work the sidelines and make catches with opposing players draped all over him. He'll get a lot of drives going on third-down situations this season.

coverages while playing zone. They hope to remedy that situation in 2018.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The Ravens might have the strongest kicking game in the NFL. Justin Tucker is the NFL's most accurate kicker of all time, hitting on 202 of 224 field-goal attempts to produce a 90.2-percent success rate. In 2017, he made 34 of 37 attempts, including 19 straight to close out the year. Punter Sam Koch has a 45.2-yard career gross average and he led the league last season with a franchise-record 40 punts inside the 20-yard line. The team returns two of its top special-teams tacklers from a year ago in safety Anthony Levine Sr. and running back Allen. The Ravens are in need of returners but both Brown and Snead have experience.

BOTTOM LINE

Until proven otherwise, the Ravens are an average team in a league that thrives off of mediocrity. They have come close to making the playoffs the past two seasons but can't finish off opponents in big games, particularly those in the AFC North. They failed to make the playoffs last season despite playing one of the worst second-half schedules in the NFL, and that schedule is tougher in 2018. The Ravens made some upgrades in personnel but not to the point where these players will have significant impact. They will battle for a wild-card playoff spot, but even if they get in, they won't advance far into the postseason.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C+
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...
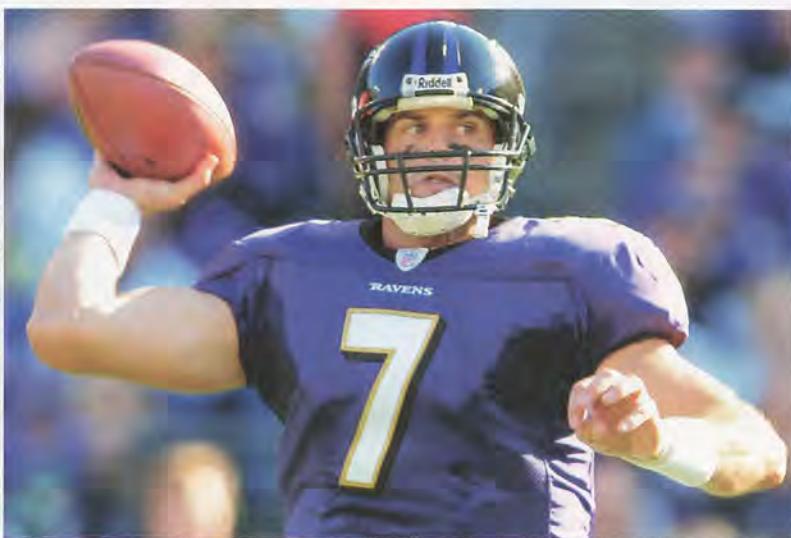
... someone other than Joe Flacco opened the season as the Ravens' starting quarterback was 2007, the year before the former Super Bowl MVP was drafted. It was a season in which Baltimore had a revolving door at the position, turning to **Kyle Boller** (8 starts), Steve McNair (6) and Troy Smith (2) under center during a 5-11 campaign. Drafted No. 18 overall in 2008 out of Delaware, the 33-year-old iron man has started all 154 games he has been available for in his 10 NFL campaigns, including nine in which he started all 16 regular-season contests.

⭘ NEW ARRIVALS

- **WR** Michael Crabtree
  (free agent, Oakland)
- **WR** Willie Snead IV
  (free agent, New Orleans)
- **WR** John Brown
  (free agent, Arizona)
- **QB** Robert Griffin III
  (free agent, Cleveland)

Willie Snead IV

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Ravens' goal was to improve their offense this offseason and they made some strides through the draft. South Carolina tight end Hayden Hurst was the team's top pick and the Ravens expect him to get playing time immediately. Hurst has good size and should be able to work the deep third of the field as well as the short- to midrange passing game. The Ravens might have also found their quarterback of the future in Louisville's **Lamar Jackson**, whom they took late in the first round. He probably won't play a lot this season unless Flacco gets hurt, but he could become the starter in a year or two. Two third-round players could have some impact this season. Oklahoma offensive tackle Orlando Brown might press James Hurst for some playing time late in the the season, and Sooners tight end Mark Andrews could see some action in passing situations. Overall, the Ravens stayed with their promise of adding offensive talent in the offseason.

2018 DRAFT GRADE

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⭘ THE RAVENS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	25	Hayden Hurst	TE	6-4	250	25	South Carolina
1	32	Lamar Jackson	QB	6-2	216	21	Louisville
3	83	Orlando Brown	T	6-8	345	22	Oklahoma
3	86	Mark Andrews	TE	6-5	254	22	Oklahoma
4	118	Anthony Averett	CB	6-0	185	23	Alabama
4	122	Kenny Young	LB	6-1	235	22	UCLA
4	132	Jaleel Scott	WR	6-6	215	23	New Mexico State
5	162	Jordan Lasley	WR	6-1	210	21	UCLA
6	190	DeShon Elliott	DB	6-2	210	21	Texas
6	212	Greg Senat	T	6-8	290	24	Wagner
6	215	Bradley Bozeman	C	6-5	311	23	Alabama
7	238	Zach Sieler	DE	6-6	290	23	Ferris State

⭘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: John Harbaugh, **Head Coach;** Marty Mornhinweg, **Offensive Coordinator;** Don Martindale, **Defensive Coordinator;** Jerry Rosburg, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
5 Flacco, Joe	QB	6-6	245	33	11	Delaware
3 Griffin III, Robert	QB	6-2	218	28	6	Baylor
7 Woodrum, Josh	QB	6-3	231	25	1	Liberty

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
70 Donnal, Andrew	T	6-6	310	26	4	Iowa
71 Eluemunor, Jermaine	G/T	6-4	330	23	2	Texas A&M
74 Hurst, James	T	6-5	317	26	5	North Carolina
72 Lewis, Alex	G/T	6-6	315	26	3	Nebraska
62 Moore, Steven	T	6-6	303	24	1	California
76 Shakir, Maurquice	G	6-4	308	24	2	Middle Tennessee
65 Siragusa, Nico	G	6-4	320	24	2	San Diego State
68 Skura, Matt	G/C	6-3	313	25	2	Duke
79 Stanley, Ronnie	T	6-6	320	24	3	Notre Dame
73 Yanda, Marshal	G/T	6-3	305	33	12	Iowa

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
37 Allen, Javorius	RB	6-0	222	27	4	USC
34 Collins, Alex	RB	5-10	210	24	3	Arkansas
45 Crockett, John	RB	6-0	215	26	2	North Dakota State
30 Dixon, Kenneth	RB	5-10	212	24	3	Louisiana Tech
44 Ortiz, Ricky	FB	6-0	230	24	1	Oregon State

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
16 Adeboyejo, Quincy	WR	6-3	197	23	1	Ole Miss
86 Boyle, Nick	TE	6-4	270	25	4	Delaware
13 Brown, John	WR	5-11	179	28	5	Pittsburg State
15 Crabtree, Michael	WR	6-1	215	30	10	Texas Tech
88 Mayle, Vince	TE	6-2	228	27	3	Washington State
10 Moore, Chris	WR	6-1	200	25	3	Cincinnati
11 Perriman, Breshad	WR	6-2	215	25	4	UCF
85 Posey, DeVier	WR	6-1	210	28	3	Ohio State
83 Snead IV, Willie	WR	5-11	195	25	4	Ball State
6 White, Tim	WR	5-10	175	24	2	Arizona State
87 Williams, Maxx	TE	6-4	257	24	4	Minnesota

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
94 Davis, Carl	DT	6-5	327	26	4	Iowa
69 Henry, Willie	DT	6-3	300	24	3	Michigan
92 Kaufusi, Bronson	DE	6-6	285	27	3	BYU
97 Pierce, Michael	DT	6-0	340	25	3	Samford
42 Ricard, Patrick	DL	6-3	300	24	2	Maine
96 Urban, Brent	DE	6-7	300	27	5	Virginia
98 Williams, Brandon	DT	6-1	340	29	6	Missouri Southern State
93 Wormley, Chris	DE	6-5	300	24	2	Michigan

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
54 Bowser, Tyus	LB	6-3	240	23	2	Houston
53 Bradley, Bam	LB	5-11	237	24	2	Pittsburgh
51 Correa, Kamalei	LB	6-3	250	24	3	Boise State
99 Judon, Matthew	LB	6-3	275	26	3	Grand Valley State
50 McClellan, Albert	LB	6-2	250	32	8	Marshall
57 Mosley, C.J.	LB	6-2	250	26	5	Alabama
48 Onwuasor, Patrick	LB	6-0	217	26	3	Portland State
90 Smith, Za'Darius	LB	6-4	275	26	4	Kentucky
55 Suggs, Terrell	LB	6-3	265	35	16	Arizona State
56 Williams, Tim	LB	6-3	260	24	2	Alabama

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
26 Canady, Maurice	CB	6-1	193	24	3	Virginia
24 Carr, Brandon	CB	6-0	210	32	11	Grand Valley State
36 Clark, Chuck	S	6-0	210	23	2	Virginia Tech
31 Daniel, Robertson	CB	6-1	205	26	1	BYU
43 Hill, Jaylen	CB	5-10	186	24	2	Jacksonville State
29 Humphrey, Marlon	CB	6-0	197	22	2	Alabama
39 Jackson, Bennett	CB	6-0	192	26	2	Notre Dame
38 Jean-Baptiste, Stanley	CB	6-3	218	28	3	Nebraska
23 Jefferson, Tony	S	5-11	212	26	6	Oklahoma
41 Levine Sr., Anthony	DB	5-11	200	31	7	Tennessee State
30 Nelson, Robert	CB	5-9	175	28	3	Arizona State
22 Smith, Jimmy	CB	6-2	210	30	8	Colorado
32 Weddle, Eric	S	5-11	200	33	12	Utah
25 Young, Tavon	CB	5-9	177	24	3	Temple

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
46 Cox, Morgan	LS	6-4	233	32	9	Tennessee
4 Koch, Sam	P	6-1	222	36	13	Nebraska
9 Tucker, Justin	K	6-1	183	28	7	Texas

CLEVELAND
BROWNS

Cleveland Browns first-round draft pick Baker Mayfield, center, with girlfriend Emily Wilkinson, and brother Matt Mayfield.

MAYFIELD: PHIL LONG / AP

2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Pittsburgh	**@ New Orleans**	**N.Y. Jets**	**@ Oakland**	**Baltimore**	**L.A. Chargers**	**@ Tampa Bay**	**@ Pittsburgh**
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 20 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 30 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM

Browns should improve, but just how much is way up in the air after much-maligned draft

BY STEVE DOERSCHUK
Canton (Ohio) Repository

The good news is that the Browns are in position to match or exceed their win total from the last three seasons combined. The bad news is that they were 3-13, 1-15 and 0-16. The psychological scar is hideous enough to make anyone wonder how the team can start looking good without an excruciatingly long operation.

Possibly, a healing will have been expedited by an aggressive infusion of veterans via trades and free agency, fortified by a robust cap surplus and driven hard by new general manager John Dorsey. The development of three first-round picks from 2017 and arrival of four more top-40 selections in the latest draft means living with growing pains. They are pains worth enduring if those high picks can actually play. Dorsey quickly became the face of the franchise, operating with a blue-collar boldness that appeals to a fed-up fanbase.

Dorsey's mantra has become, "Let's rebuild this sleeping giant."

This is more of a coma than sleep. The Browns needed a strong-handed giant shaker.

OFFENSE

New coordinator Todd Haley operated with Ben Roethlisberger, Antonio Brown and Le'Veon Bell on an AFC North champ in Pittsburgh last year. Head coach Hue Jackson wasn't playing with such cards on the 0-16 Browns. Jackson's and Haley's minds now meld after the Browns receive upgrades at quarterback, running back and receiver. The coaches will challenge new QB Tyrod Taylor to be more dynamic than he was in Buffalo while getting No. 1 draft pick Baker Mayfield ready. The upgrades could lead to the versatile attack both desire and a better-looking product.

QUARTERBACKS: Taylor avoids making bad things happen–he posted a league-best .095 interception percentage in 2017–but he was too cautious to make enough good things happen for the Bills. The Browns hope his three years of experience as a starter, a change of scenery and compatibility with new coaches add up to growth. His first NFL playoff start, a fitful loss at Jacksonville, exposed his weaknesses and left him in concussion protocol. A shade under 6-1, Taylor is one of the shortest quarterbacks in the league, but he also is one of the fastest, using his scrambling ability more to keep passing plays alive than to look for rushing opportunities.

Mayfield brings swag and ability, but Taylor is supposed to play indefinitely, so it will be a while until the 6-0 rookie proves he is ready. Drew Stanton, 34, is an ideal extra QB.

4 PREDICTED FINISH AFC NORTH

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Tyrod Taylor
	Baker Mayfield
FB	Danny Vitale
RB	Carlos Hyde
	Duke Johnson
LT	Shon Coleman
	Austin Corbett
LG	Joel Bitonio
	Spencer Drango
C	JC Tretter
	Austin Reiter
RG	Kevin Zeitler
	Geoff Gray
RT	Chris Hubbard
	Donald Stephenson
TE	David Njoku
	Darren Fells
WR	Josh Gordon
	Corey Coleman
WR	Jarvis Landry
	Jeff Janis

DEFENSE
DE	Myles Garrett
	Chris Smith
DT	Larry Ogunjobi
	Jamie Meder
DT	Trevon Coley
	Caleb Brantley
DE	Emmanuel Ogbah
	Chad Thomas
OLB	Jamie Collins
	James Burgess
MLB	Joe Schobert
	Tank Carder
OLB	Christian Kirksey
	Dominique Alexander
CB	Denzel Ward
	Jamar Taylor
CB	T.J. Carrie
	Brian Boddy-Calhoun
SS	Jabrill Peppers
	Derrick Kindred
FS	Damarious Randall
	Justin Currie

SPECIALISTS
LS	Charley Hughlett
P	Britton Colquitt
K	Zane Gonzalez
KR	Duke Johnson
PR	Jabrill Peppers

BYE: WEEK 11 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Game time to be released by Week 8.

Week 9	**Week 10**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Kansas City	Atlanta	@ Cincinnati	@ Houston	Carolina	@ Denver	Cincinnati	@ Baltimore
Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 15 / TBD*	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

CLEVELAND **BROWNS**

Myles Garrett, DE

⬊ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
15-65

4-12	7-9	3-13	1-15	0-16
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
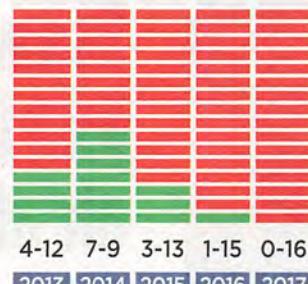
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

RUNNING BACKS: A prescient scouting report when Carlos Hyde was coming out of Ohio State said he was built for the grinding style of the cold-weather AFC North. After four years with the 49ers, here's his chance, probably in a platoon with second-round rookie Nick Chubb. Hyde is a bit bigger than departed starter Isaiah Crowell and is better at identifying holes, with the power to make his own. Hyde emerged as a receiver last year, catching 59 passes, more than his previous three years combined. His best production came in 2016 (988 yards, 4.6 average), but at age 27, having logged just 655 NFL carries (Pittsburgh's Le'Veon Bell already has 1,229), he should have fresh legs.

Shifty Duke Johnson Jr. was a tremendous ballcarrier in college with the Miami Hurricanes but has made his mark as a receiver (188 catches) in three years with the Browns. He shows big-play ability as a runner or receiver and has untapped upside. He is in a contract year.

RECEIVERS: Four things must happen for the Browns to go from having one of the weakest receiving groups in the NFL to one of the best. One, Jarvis Landry must continue being himself (he averaged 100 catches and 1,009 yards in four seasons with the Dolphins). Second, Josh Gordon must prove his marathon bout with suspensions is behind him and, at age 27, he can be the same prototype player who led the NFL with 1,646 receiving yards in 2013. (A hopeful sign: He had a 115-yard game at Pittsburgh in the season finale.) Third, Corey Coleman must avoid the injuries that marred his first two pro seasons and play like the first wideout picked in the 2016 draft. Fourth, 2017 first-round tight end David Njoku must grow into his immense physical potential. New wideouts coach Adam Henry was Landry's position coach at LSU. Free-agent pickup Darren Fells (6-7, 270 pounds) is a beast of a blocker at tight end.

OFFENSIVE LINE: Right guard Kevin Zeitler is very good, but he says, "I'm not as good as (left guard) Joel (Bitonio) … Joel is a monster." They should make a jump in their second year together, providing fierce interior blocking for a power running game. The guards and center JC Tretter played every down in 2017. A former Ivy Leaguer, Tretter was a Green Bay backup trying to convince the Cleveland brass last season that he is more than a stopgap.

Left tackle Joe Thomas missed the second half of last season and was replaced by 2016 fifth-round pick Spencer Drango. Shon Coleman, a third-round pick two years ago, started every game

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Browns

"They kept talking about how hard they played. I guess they did, but how far is that supposed to get you? A team that nondescript really needed some leaders who can play. I don't know how much better Tyrod Taylor will ever be, but he's a serious upgrade from what they had at quarterback. And he can lead. They were losing when they had Joe Thomas at left tackle. Then he got hurt and they didn't win a game. Good luck replacing him. Jarvis Landry would be good for any
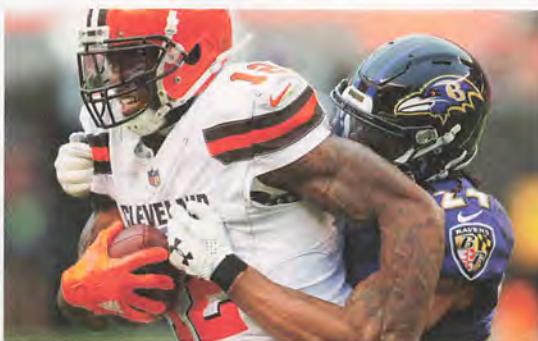
wideout room. **Josh Gordon** and Corey Coleman have talent. I've gotta think Landry's influence will help them.

"John Dorsey grew up under (longtime Green Bay general manager) Ron Wolf and it shows. He knows what a player should look like. The shock of getting fired in Kansas City probably helps him with some of the relationship stuff he's sorting through with a new team. Todd Haley and Gregg Williams are pretty strong voices. I'm not sure what that will look like with a head coach who has had two pretty rough years."

⬃ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	18-21	Pittsburgh Steelers
09/17	L	10-24	Baltimore Ravens
09/24	L	28-31	Indianapolis Colts
10/01	L	7-31	Cincinnati Bengals
10/08	L	14-17	New York Jets
10/15	L	17-33	Houston Texans
10/22	L	9-12	Tennessee Titans
10/29	L	16-33	Minnesota Vikings
11/12	L	24-38	Detroit Lions
11/19	L	7-19	Jacksonville Jaguars
11/26	L	16-30	Cincinnati Bengals
12/03	L	10-19	Los Angeles Chargers
12/10	L	21-27	Green Bay Packers
12/17	L	10-27	Baltimore Ravens
12/24	L	3-20	Chicago Bears
12/31	L	24-28	Pittsburgh Steelers

2017 RECORD: 0-16

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Crowell	206	853	4.1	59	2
Johnson Jr.	82	348	4.2	19t	4
Kizer	77	419	5.4	20	5
Hogan	10	71	7.1	11	0
Dayes	5	13	2.6	4	0
Treggs	1	6	6.0	6	0
Higgins	1	4	4.0	4	0
Njoku	1	1	1.0	1	0
Kessler	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
CLEVELAND	384	1,714	4.5	59	11
OPPONENTS	467	1,566	3.4	39	14

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Johnson Jr.	74	693	9.4	41t	3
DeValve	33	395	12.0	49	1
Njoku	32	386	12.1	34	4
Crowell	28	182	6.5	38	0
Louis	27	357	13.2	37	0
Higgins	27	312	11.6	56t	2
Coleman	23	305	13.3	44	2
Gordon	18	335	18.6	54	1
Britt	18	233	12.9	38	2
Williams	9	84	9.3	14	0
Coates	6	70	11.7	38	0
Treggs	5	79	15.8	20	0
Dayes	4	29	7.3	15	0
Telfer	3	36	12.0	20	0
Vitale	3	19	6.3	11	0
Leslie	1	26	26.0	26	0
Zeitler	1	-4	-4.0	-4	0
CLEVELAND	312	3,537	11.3	56t	15
OPPONENTS	360	3,881	10.8	61t	28

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Kizer	476	255	2,894	11	22
Hogan	75	46	517	4	5
Kessler	23	11	126	0	1
CLEVELAND	574	312	3,228	15	28
OPPONENTS	525	360	3,684	28	7

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Dayes	18	437	24.3	71	0
Peppers	14	318	22.7	35	0
Orchard	2	17	8.5	9	0
Vitale	1	18	18.0	18	0
CLEVELAND	35	790	22.6	71	0
OPPONENTS	20	471	23.5	96t	1

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Peppers	30	180	6.0	25	0
Treggs	5	24	4.8	11	0
Johnson Jr.	3	17	5.7	12	0
CLEVELAND	38	221	5.8	25	0
OPPONENTS	45	482	10.7	65	0

SACKS   CLEVELAND 34.0, OPPONENTS 50.0

Garrett 7.0, Burgess 4.0, Ogbah 4.0, Kirksey 3.5, Nassib 3.0, Schobert 3.0, Brantley 2.0, Coley 2.0, Orchard 2.0, Collins 1.0, Currie 1.0, Ogunjobi 1.0, Taylor 0.5

⬃ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	308.9	24
Rushing	107.1	18
Passing	201.8	22
Scoring	14.6	32
Punt returns	5.8	29
Kick returns	22.6	8
Red zone TD%	48.7	25t
Total defense	328.1	14
Against rush	97.9	7
Against pass	230.2	19
Points allowed	25.6	31
Interceptions	7	31
Sacks	34.0	21
Turnover diff.	-28	32

at right tackle, including after Thomas went down. The team preferred not to make a double move, but now the more athletic Coleman will be groomed to replace the retired Thomas on the left side. Free-agent acquisition Chris Hubbard was a spot starter in Pittsburgh, but the Browns project him as a quality right tackle and gave him a five-year, $37.5 million contract. Rookie second-rounder Austin Corbett can play any line position.

DEFENSE

Gregg Williams enters his second year as coordinator after a humbling 2017 when his bluster and reputation collided with the realities of a young, patchwork roster. Williams has used a kitchen sink of schemes across his career and spent the year trying to teach players with great potential some big-picture concepts. Look for some of the emerging players to plug into more refined assignments. His base 4-3 defense may be tweaked now that 2015 first-round pick Danny Shelton, an interior lineman, has been traded.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Myles Garrett can be special, but he battled injuries and didn't look the part of a No. 1 overall pick as a 2017 rookie. He needs to stay healthy and dial up some intensity. A strong full season is needed from third-year man Emmanuel Ogbah, the No. 32 overall pick in 2016. He was OK as a rookie 3-4 end and was coming into his own as a 4-3 end in his first year under Williams before breaking his foot in Game 10.

Trading Shelton underscored an old problem: weak returns on first-round investments. It also left the tackle spot in flux. Trevon Coley, undrafted in 2016, scrapped his way into 656 snaps last season. Larry Ogunjobi, a third-round pick in 2017 who played 301 snaps, brings a rugged intensity. Veterans Jamie Meder, Nate Orchard, Chris Smith and Carl Nassib add versatility and depth.

LINEBACKERS: There has been a sense for years that Jamie Collins could be an elite strongside linebacker, but he's never quite gotten there. The former Patriots second-round pick made it through only six games in his first full season with the Browns. It's getting late; he turns 29 in October. Keeping his size, talent and experience on the field will

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Cleveland head coach Hue Jackson

Jackson has experienced everything under the sun, even a taste of success as an NFL head coach (the 2011 Raiders were 7-4 before fading to 8-8 and firing him). He has coached quarterbacks, receivers, running backs, defensive backs and special teams. He ran the offense for a 12-4 team in Cincinnati in 2015, getting a career year out of an adequate QB and playing matchup ball with two backs. His headstrong streak as an offensive thinker got him in trouble when he was his own coordinator the last two years. He had no choice but to accept the hiring of a self-confident coordinator, Todd Haley.

CLEVELAND **BROWNS**

be important. Middle linebacker Joe Schobert began last year behind Tank Carder and finished it in the Pro Bowl. He and weakside linebacker Christian Kirksey are tough, smart craftsmen who played all 1,068 defensive snaps last year. They played with a discipline that helped the Browns rank second in yards allowed per rushing attempt.

James Burgess's nine starts in 2017 will serve him well as the unit's top backup. He prepares and plays with passion and delivered 10 tackles for loss last year. Carder's toughness has led to a long career on special teams. He is back after spending 2017 on injured reserve.

SECONDARY: Dorsey cleaned house at cornerback, adding a superb talent in the draft at No. 4 overall in speedy Denzel Ward (Ohio State) and giving a big contract to free agent T.J. Carrie, who wasn't a full-time starter in Oakland until last year. Overachiever Briean

Boddy-Calhoun, a third-year player, brings attitude and might keep a job.

Safety was a weakness that could turn into a strength. Jabrill Peppers spent much of his rookie campaign lined up an acre from the action. Williams was setting him up for his second year, trying to give him a big picture. Williams thinks Peppers' reputation as a collegian at Michigan translates to prowess closer the box. Damarious Randall, who didn't play like a first-round pick as a Green Bay cornerback, was signed with the belief that he will thrive in his more natural position of free safety.

Jamar Taylor, who started for the Browns last season, might not be long for Cleveland. Dorsey brought Terrance Mitchell to the Chiefs in 2016 when he was general manager in Kansas City and signed him with the Browns to add veteran depth.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Zane Gonzalez

The Browns gave up draft picks to trade for **Jarvis Landry** and then had to pay the slot receiver like a superstar (five years, $75.5 million) to secure him over the long term. It was a necessary gamble. Consistent production from an offensive player has been nonexistent for the Browns. Landry was a first-down machine throughout his four seasons in Miami.

was a long-range machine on field goals at Arizona State but battled rookie jitters with the Browns and will have to prove he can handle NFL pressure. Britton Colquitt is an ninth-year pro from a family of punters and is outstanding at his craft. Peppers came billed as an electric return man, but half the punts he caught were fair catches, and he averaged only 6.0 yards on the ones he tried to return.

Although Matthew Dayes showed toughness and ability as a kick returner last year, he's not assured of a roster spot with increased competition. A maddening pattern of penalties during returns cost special-teams coach Chris Tabor his job after seven years with the Browns. Amos Jones, who was with Bruce Arians in Arizona the last five years, takes over the reins there.

BOTTOM LINE

The honeymoon lasted until draft day for the new general manager, Dorsey. A large block wanted his picks at No. 1 and No. 4 to include Sam Darnold, Saquon Barkley or Bradley Chubb. He came away with Baker Mayfield and Denzel Ward. The 2018 team is so full of new parts that it will be hard for coaches to make them work together. Yet, after going 1-31 in his first two years, Jackson must make it work and impress ownership, Dorsey and the fanbase. Is Tyrod Taylor enough quarterback to actually keep a No. 1 pick on the bench this year? Can Garrett play like a No. 1 pick? Those are two questions on a team with 2,000 such queries. It's hard to tell if 8-8 is as farfetched as a repeat of 0-16.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C-
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...

Browns fans organized a 'Perfect Season Parade' to voice their displeasure over the team's 0-16 record in '17.

... an NFL franchise won fewer than a total of five games over a three-year stretch was ... never. Much was made about the Browns' historic 0-16 season of futility in 2017, but when you combine it with their 1-15 campaign in 2016 and 3-13 finish in 2015, you've got **the worst three-year record in the history of pro football at 4-44.**

FAN PARADE: TONY DEJAK / AP; LANDRY: WILFREDO LEE / AP

⌄ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **QB** Tyrod Taylor
  (trade, Buffalo)
- **WR** Jarvis Landry
  (trade, Miami)
- **DB** T.J. Carrie
  (free agent, Oakland)
- **RB** Carlos Hyde
  (free agent, San Francisco)
- **OL** Chris Hubbard
  (free agent, Pittsburgh)
- **DB** Damarious Randall
  (trade, Green Bay)

Tyrod Taylor

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

No. 1 overall pick **Baker Mayfield** moves within and outside the pocket, keeps his eyes downfield, competes with ferocity and is a threat to play early. Yet, the decisionmakers seem sincere when they insist they want Mayfield to watch and learn. Fourth overall pick Denzel Ward is fast, coachable and capable of providing as much juice in 2018 as his former Ohio State teammate Marshon Lattimore gave the Saints in 2017. Austin Corbett was the first pick of the second round on the grounds he will be a good, long-term starter anywhere on the offensive line. Running back Nick Chubb, drafted two spots after Corbett, was a gritty leader on a Georgia team that played for the national championship. His hammering style suits the division. Early third-rounder Chad Thomas is a fierce run defender who projects into the rotation immediately.

2018 DRAFT GRADE

C

⌄ THE BROWNS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	1	Baker Mayfield	QB	6-0	215	23	Oklahoma
1	4	Denzel Ward	DB	5-11	190	21	Ohio State
2	33	Austin Corbett	OL	6-4	306	22	Nevada
2	35	Nick Chubb	RB	5-11	227	22	Georgia
3	67	Chad Thomas	DL	6-5	275	22	Miami (Fla.)
4	105	Antonio Callaway	WR	5-10	200	21	Florida
5	150	Genard Avery	LB	6-0	250	23	Memphis
6	175	Damion Ratley	WR	6-3	190	23	Texas A&M
6	188	Simeon Thomas	DB	6-3	197	24	Louisiana

⌄ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Hue Jackson, **Head Coach**; Todd Haley, **Offensive Coordinator**; Gregg Williams, **Defensive Coordinator**; Amos Jones, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9	Stanton, Drew	QB	6-3	226	34	12	Michigan State
5	Taylor, Tyrod	QB	6-0	217	29	8	Virginia Tech

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
75	Bitonio, Joel	OL	6-4	305	26	5	Nevada
72	Coleman, Shon	OL	6-7	310	26	3	Auburn
66	Drango, Spencer	OL	6-6	315	25	3	Baylor
79	Gray, Geoff	OL	6-5	315	23	1	Manitoba (Canada)
74	Hubbard, Chris	OL	6-3	295	27	5	UAB
78	Johnson, Rod	OL	6-6	300	22	2	Florida State
62	Reiter, Austin	OL	6-2	300	26	3	South Florida
68	Salako, Victor	OL	6-5	316	24	1	Oklahoma State
67	Schneider, Christian	OL	6-5	304	22	1	UC Davis
71	Stephenson, Donald	OL	6-5	312	29	7	Oklahoma
64	Tretter, JC	OL	6-4	307	27	6	Cornell
70	Zeitler, Kevin	OL	6-4	315	28	7	Wisconsin

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
27	Dayes, Matthew	RB	5-8	205	24	2	N.C. State
34	Hyde, Carlos	RB	5-11	229	27	5	Ohio State
25	Jackson, Darius	RB	6-0	220	24	3	Eastern Michigan
29	Johnson Jr., Duke	RB	5-9	210	24	4	Miami (Fla.)
40	Vitale, Danny	FB	6-1	239	24	3	Northwestern
42	Williams, Marquez	FB	5-10	260	24	1	Miami (Fla.)

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
16	Board, C.J.	WR	6-0	181	24	1	Chattanooga
49	Cajuste, Devon	TE	6-3	242	25	1	Stanford
19	Coleman, Corey	WR	5-11	185	24	3	Baylor
87	DeValve, Seth	TE	6-3	245	25	3	Princeton
88	Fells, Darren	TE	6-7	270	32	5	UC Irvine
12	Gordon, Josh	WR	6-3	225	27	3	Baylor
83	Hazel, Matt	WR	6-1	195	26	3	Coastal Carolina
81	Higgins, Rashard	WR	6-1	198	23	3	Colorado State
13	Janis, Jeff	WR	6-3	219	27	5	Saginaw Valley State
80	Landry, Jarvis	WR	5-11	196	25	5	LSU
15	Louis, Ricardo	WR	6-2	215	24	3	Auburn
85	Njoku, David	TE	6-4	246	22	2	Miami (Fla.)
86	Telfer, Randall	TE	6-4	250	26	3	USC
82	Williams, Kasen	WR	6-1	219	25	2	LSU

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
99	Brantley, Caleb	DL	6-2	307	24	2	Florida
93	Coley, Trevon	DL	6-1	310	24	2	Florida Atlantic
97	Faulk, Jeremy	DL	6-1	305	24	1	Garden City CC
95	Garrett, Myles	DL	6-4	272	22	2	Texas A&M
98	Meder, Jamie	DL	6-3	308	27	4	Ashland
94	Nassib, Carl	DL	6-7	275	25	3	Penn State
90	Ogbah, Emmanuel	DL	6-4	275	24	3	Oklahoma State
65	Ogunjobi, Larry	DL	6-2	305	24	2	Charlotte
44	Orchard, Nate	DL	6-4	255	25	4	Utah
50	Smith, Chris	DL	6-1	266	26	5	Arkansas

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
54	Alexander, Dominique	LB	6-0	235	23	3	Oklahoma
56	Bello, B.J.	LB	6-2	229	23	2	Illinois State
52	Burgess Jr., James	LB	6-0	230	24	2	Louisville
57	Calitro, Austin	LB	6-0	240	24	1	Villanova
59	Carder, Tank	LB	6-2	235	29	7	TCU
51	Collins Sr., Jamie	LB	6-3	250	28	6	Southern Miss
58	Kirksey, Christian	LB	6-2	235	26	5	Iowa
53	Schobert, Joe	LB	6-1	245	24	3	Wisconsin

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
20	Boddy-Calhoun, Briean	DB	5-9	193	25	3	Minnesota
38	Carrie, T.J.	DB	5-11	204	28	5	Ohio
42	Currie, Justin	DB	6-2	212	24	2	Western Michigan
28	Gaines, E.J.	DB	5-10	191	26	5	Missouri
41	Jordan, Mike	DB	6-1	200	25	3	Missouri Western State
26	Kindred, Derrick	DB	5-10	210	24	3	TCU
39	Mitchell, Terrance	DB	5-11	191	26	5	Oregon
43	Nacua, Kai	DB	6-0	205	23	2	BYU
22	Peppers, Jabrill	DB	5-11	213	22	2	Michigan
23	Randall, Damarious	DB	5-10	196	26	4	Arizona State
37	Rice, Denzel	DB	5-11	185	25	2	Coastal Carolina
36	Smith, Derron	DB	5-10	200	26	4	Fresno State
21	Taylor, Jamar	DB	5-11	192	27	6	Boise State
24	Wilson, Howard	DB	6-0	184	22	1	Houston

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4	Colquitt, Britton	P	6-3	210	33	9	Tennessee
2	Gonzalez, Zane	K	6-0	202	23	2	Arizona State
47	Hughlett, Charley	LS	6-4	248	28	4	UCF

EXCEPT DAWGS

JACKSONVILLE
JAGUARS

Leonard Fournette, RB

FOURNETTE: DON WRIGHT / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
@ N.Y. Giants	New England	Tennessee	N.Y. Jets	@ Kansas City	@ Dallas	Houston	Philadelphia*
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 9:30 AM

2017 RECORD
OVERALL: 10-6 **HOME:** 6-2
CONFERENCE: 9-3 **DIVISION:** 4-2

HEAD COACH **DOUG MARRONE** (SECOND YEAR, 11-7)
CAREER RECORD: 26-24

▶ **ONLINE:** www.jaguars.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @Jaguars
▶ **TICKETS:** 904-633-2000
▶ **STADIUM:** EverBank Field
▶ **CAPACITY:** 69,132
▶ **TURF:** Grass

Young, talented and hungry Jags look to shake off heartbreaking playoff loss

BY GENE FRENETTE
Florida Times-Union

After going through five years of repeated misery, the Jaguars finally uncovered a winning formula in 2017. They completed a remarkable turnaround, which started by bringing back Tom Coughlin as vice president of football operations, and came within one play of reaching their first Super Bowl.

Now the question becomes whether the Jaguars and second-year coach Doug Marrone can handle success. Or will becoming the hunted in a potentially tight AFC South race cause them to take a step back?

One thing is certain: The Jaguars, who jumped from 3-13 to 10-6, have established a team-first mindset and nothing short of finding redemption for not closing out the New England Patriots in the AFC title game will be satisfactory.

"The bar has been raised, the expectations are different," says quarterback Blake Bortles, who was signed to a three-year, $54 million contract extension in February. "To be able to go through the season we went through last year, the camp that we went through and kind of see everything that happened, I think guys are coming back

this year with a totally different attitude and kind of a hunger to reach that final game and go win it."

With nearly all the pieces back on a stout defense, and Bortles' confidence buoyed by a turnover-free postseason, Jacksonville's days as a bottom-feeder are history. This is still a relatively young team with a makeup and roster to challenge for AFC supremacy—provided Bortles can keep progressing.

OFFENSE

Jacksonville went from throwing the ball a franchise-record 626 times in 2016 to a 50-50 balance (527 runs and passes) last season. Look for a greater emphasis on the run game this year, considering the Jaguars fortified the offensive line by signing All-Pro guard Andrew Norwell. The Jaguars expect running back Leonard Fournette to show better vision and have a few more explosive runs, which should open things up for Bortles to become more efficient as a passer. Bortles has matured and taken on more of a leadership role. The familiarity with offensive coordinator Nathaniel Hackett's system and the team's postseason run have bolstered his credibility within the locker room.

QUARTERBACKS: There's no question the way Bortles performed in the postseason compelled the Jaguars to offer him a three-year contract extension. So instead of simply letting him play on his

PREDICTED FINISH AFC SOUTH 1

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Blake Bortles
	Cody Kessler
FB	Tommy Bohanon
	Hunter Dimmick
RB	Leonard Fournette
	T.J. Yeldon
LT	Cam Robinson
	Josh Wells
LG	Andrew Norwell
	Chris Reed
C	Brandon Linder
	Tyler Shatley
RG	A.J. Cann
	Tyler Shatley
RT	Jermey Parnell
	Will Richardson
TE	Austin Seferian-Jenkins
	Ben Koyack
WR	Marqise Lee
	D.J. Chark
WR	Donte Moncrief
	Keelan Cole

DEFENSE
DE	Yannick Ngakoue
	Dante Fowler Jr.
DT	Malik Jackson
	Taven Bryan
DT	Marcell Dareus
	Abry Jones
DE	Calais Campbell
	Dawuane Smoot
OLB	Telvin Smith
	Donald Payne
MLB	Myles Jack
	Brooks Ellis
OLB	Blair Brown
	Leon Jacobs
CB	A.J. Bouye
	Jalen Myrick
CB	Jalen Ramsey
	D.J. Hayden
SS	Barry Church
	Ronnie Harrison
FS	Tashaun Gipson
	Cody Davis

SPECIALISTS
LS	Carson Tinker
P	Logan Cooke
K	Josh Lambo
KR	Corey Grant
PR	Jaydon Mickens

BYE: WEEK 9 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. ***London** ****Game may be flexed to Saturday, Dec. 22.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
@ Indianapolis	Pittsburgh	@ Buffalo	Indianapolis	@ Tennessee	Washington	@ Miami	@ Houston
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 6 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23** / TBD**	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

JACKSONVILLE **JAGUARS**

Jalen Ramsey, CB

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
25-55

4-12	3-13	5-11	3-13	10-6
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

fifth-year option and providing legitimate competition for his job, the Jags will ride with Bortles as the starter in 2018 and possibly beyond. Bortles impressed his bosses by going three playoff games without a turnover–something Tom Brady has never done in one postseason– and that's a big part of Jacksonville's winning formula. It'll be interesting to see if the trust Bortles has accrued results in Hackett taking more chances throwing the ball downfield. By NFL standards, Bortles was an average QB last season–21 touchdown passes, 7.0 yards per attempt and 41 completions of 20-plus yards–but he turned it up a notch in the playoffs. The Jags signed veteran Cody Kessler as a backup, but he's not a threat to take over as the starter even if Bortles struggles.

RUNNING BACKS: The Jaguars are counting on Fournette to be the second coming of former franchise great Fred Taylor, and he showed flashes during his rookie season of being a generational-type back. Though his yards-per-carry average (3.9) fell short of expectations, Fournette was still one of nine NFL backs with 1,000 rushing yards from scrimmage and 10 total TDs despite missing three games with injuries. With Norwell's presence upgrading the O-line, many feel this could be a breakout-type season if Fournette stays healthy. The Jags led the NFL in rushing (141.4 yards per game) last year, but failed miserably in the fourth quarter of the AFC title game when they couldn't move the chains and lost a 10-point lead. With Chris Ivory gone, look for T.J. Yeldon and back Corey Grant to get more of a workload. Tommy Bohanon, who had a 14-yard TD catch in a playoff win over the Steelers, returns as the fullback.

RECEIVERS: With Allen Robinson and Allen Hurns both gone, it'll be interesting to see who emerges as the standout from a unit that has nobody with a 1,000-yard season on their resume. The Jaguars signed Marqise Lee to a four-year, $38 million extension after letting Robinson go in free agency. Finally healthy the last two years, Lee must now prove he's ready to be a go-to receiver. Donte Moncrief was acquired on a one-year, $9.6 million deal after the Colts discarded him. The Jaguars are hoping his 4.4 speed will help stretch the field, and the same holds true for second-round draft pick D.J. Chark, who gives Bortles the big target he had with Robinson and a legitimate deep threat. Keelan Cole, an undrafted rookie who emerged as a huge surprise last season with a team-high 748 receiving yards, will likely be in the No. 3 role. Dede Westbrook, a fourth-round pick in 2017, has the inside track as the fifth receiver. If somebody can ascend

RAMSEY: DON WRIGHT / AP; BORTLES: WINSLOW TOWNSON / AP

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Jaguars

"This team should be locked and loaded to make another postseason run. The Jaguars have been building this thing for four or five years. (General manager) Dave Caldwell has done a great job, hitting on a lot of draft picks and free agents. Even though the game has evolved into a passer league, you still need a good defense and run game to close out games, and the Jaguars have that. They dominated New England for three and a half quarters (in the AFC Championship Game) before letting it slip away. They're loaded at every defensive position. (Leonard) Fournette gives them a run identity and he should only get better. My concern would be whether they can stay as healthy on defense as they were last year.
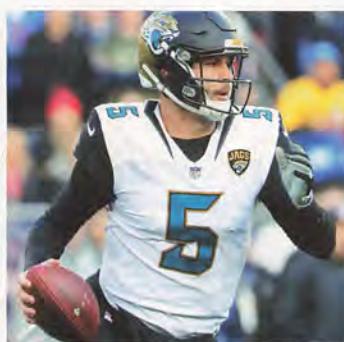
"On offense, the thing with **Blake (Bortles)** is when called upon to rally the troops and make a comeback, that's where his struggles come in. Where he excels is taking deep shots off play-action. They're built very similar to the way the Seattle Seahawks were with an explosive defense and a quarterback that can do damage with his legs. The Jaguars are in a good spot. Except for Tom Brady, all the quarterbacks who can beat that defense are in the NFC. I'd be confident as a betting man to say they've got at least a two-year window to chase this (Super Bowl) thing, and it could go longer."

↘ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	29-7	Houston Texans
09/17	L	16-37	Tennessee Titans
09/24	W	44-7	Baltimore Ravens
10/01	L	20-23	New York Jets
10/08	W	30-9	Pittsburgh Steelers
10/15	L	17-27	Los Angeles Rams
10/22	W	27-0	Indianapolis Colts
11/05	W	23-7	Cincinnati Bengals
11/12	W	20-17	Los Angeles Chargers
11/19	W	19-7	Cleveland Browns
11/26	L	24-27	Arizona Cardinals
12/03	W	30-10	Indianapolis Colts
12/10	W	30-24	Seattle Seahawks
12/17	W	45-7	Houston Texans
12/24	L	33-44	San Francisco 49ers
12/31	L	10-15	Tennessee Titans
2017 RECORD: 10-6			

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Fournette	268	1,040	3.9	90t	9
Ivory	112	382	3.4	34	1
Bortles	57	322	5.6	28	2
Yeldon	49	253	5.2	58t	2
Grant	30	248	8.3	58	2
Bohanon	5	5	1.0	3	2
Henne	5	-5	-1.0	-1	0
Lee	1	17	17.0	17	0
JACKSONVILLE	527	2,262	4.3	90t	18
OPPONENTS	429	1,860	4.3	75t	9

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Lee	56	702	12.5	45	3
Cole	42	748	17.8	75t	3
Hurns	39	484	12.4	50	2
Fournette	36	302	8.4	28	1
Yeldon	30	224	7.5	20	0
Westbrook	27	339	12.6	29	1
Lewis	24	318	13.3	37	5
Ivory	21	175	8.3	29	1
O'Shaughnessy	14	149	10.6	29	1
Mickens	6	77	12.8	41	2
Bohanon	6	43	7.2	14	1
Koyack	5	38	7.6	21	0
Grant	3	41	13.7	28	0
Strong	3	38	12.7	19	1
Robinson	1	17	17.0	17	0
Benn	1	12	12.0	12	0
Pinkard	1	5	5.0	5	0
McCaffrey	1	4	4.0	4	0
JACKSONVILLE	316	3,716	11.8	75t	21
OPPONENTS	289	3,074	10.6	74t	17

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Bortles	523	315	3,687	21	13
Henne	2	0	0	0	0
Nortman	1	1	29	0	0
Lee	1	0	0	0	0
JACKSONVILLE	527	316	3,593	21	13
OPPONENTS	509	289	2,718	17	21

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Grant	19	473	24.9	68	0
Cole	2	26	13.0	14	0
Mickens	2	20	10.0	20	0
Myrick	1	18	18.0	18	0
Bohanon	1	14	14.0	14	0
JACKSONVILLE	25	551	22.0	68	0
OPPONENTS	40	817	20.4	103t	1

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Mickens	27	287	10.6	72	1
Lee	5	13	2.6	7	0
Westbrook	1	19	19.0	19	0
McCaffrey	1	0	0.0	0	0
Grant	0	6	-	6	0
JACKSONVILLE	34	325	9.6	72	1
OPPONENTS	30	228	7.6	46	0

SACKS	JACKSONVILLE 55.0, OPPONENTS 24.0

Campbell 14.5, Ngakoue 12.0, Fowler Jr. 8.0, Jackson 8.0, Jack 2.0, Ankou 1.5, Church 1.5, McCray 1.5, Posluszny 1.5, Dareus 1.0, Day 1.0, Jones 1.0, Smith 1.0, Brown 0.5

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	365.9	6
Rushing	141.4	1
Passing	224.6	17
Scoring	26.1	5
Punt returns	9.6	7
Kick returns	22.0	14
Red zone TD%	69.0	1
Total defense	286.1	2
Against rush	116.2	21
Against pass	169.9	1
Points allowed	16.8	2
Interceptions	21	2
Sacks	55.0	2
Turnover diff.	+10	5t

into stardom from this receiving corps, the Jags' offense has a good chance to be potent.

OFFENSIVE LINE: In 2017, this was by far the most improved unit. It struggled in training camp, then progressed to the point of clearing a path for the NFL's top rushing team and allowed just 24.0 sacks, the lowest in franchise history. Norwell's arrival is the most significant O-line upgrade since the Jaguars signed right tackle Leon Searcy before the 1996 season, which triggered a four-year playoff run. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the rest of the line from last season is expected to remain intact—left tackle Cam Robinson, center Brandon Linder, right guard A.J. Cann and right tackle Jermey Parnell. With this group, it's a good bet the Jaguars will again lead the NFL in rushing attempts. Cann and Parnell, still the line's weakest links, have to step things up because Fournette's per-carry average must be at least a half-yard better for the Jaguars to have a special season. If fourth-round draft pick Will Richardson develops quickly, he could challenge for Parnell's job or at least earn a backup job at both tackle positions. Tyler Shatley, Josh Wells and Chris Reed will provide the main competition for backup spots.

DEFENSE

If coordinator Todd Wash's unit comes close to duplicating the game-changing presence it had in 2017, not to mention the health factor (starters missed only three of a possible 209 starts), the Jaguars will be a nightmare for offensive coordinators in game-planning. They had an NFL-leading seven touchdowns, plus 55.0 sacks, 33 takeaways and allowed 16.8 points per game during the regular season—second in each of those categories—and were just as disruptive in the postseason (7.0 sacks, 5 turnovers, 1 TD). The Jags also allowed the league's fewest red-zone drives (28) and red-zone TDs (11). With nearly all of the key pieces returning, this defense should keep terrorizing opponents.

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Jacksonville head coach Doug Marrone

One of the reasons Marrone was elevated from coaching the offensive line to head coach after the 2016 season is that his philosophy on emphasizing the run meshed with front-office czar Tom Coughlin, a fellow Syracuse alumnus. Coughlin favors punishing defenses by winning the line of scrimmage, figuring that establishing physicality will help the Jaguars close out games if they have a lead in the fourth quarter. Marrone is right in line with that thinking, and he proved it in 2017. Nobody had more rushing attempts (527) or rushing yards per game (141.4) last year than Jacksonville, a trend that figures to continue because Marrone knows he has a stout defense to make that offensive style work.

JACKSONVILLE **JAGUARS**

DEFENSIVE LINE: The arrival of defensive end Calais Campbell may go down as the most significant free-agent acquisition in team history. Not only did he shatter his previous career high with 14.5 sacks last season, but Campbell brought a leadership quality that played a huge factor in the Jaguars forging a true bond and setting a franchise record for win improvement. Between Campbell and second-year end Yannick Ngakoue, who had 12.0 sacks and six forced fumbles, the pressure they created up front made things easier for the secondary.

Dante Fowler Jr. (8.0 sacks), a 2015 first-round draft pick, will continue as Ngakoue's backup, while second-year Dawuane Smoot should get more snaps to ease some of the load on Campbell.

Veteran Malik Jackson (8.0 sacks) will anchor the three-technique tackle position, but his future could be shortened if first-round draft pick Taven Bryan develops faster than expected. Marcell Dareus was a big factor in improving the run defense and will likely rotate again with Abry Jones.

LINEBACKERS: Saying goodbye to the retired Paul Posluszny will be a setback in game-planning and as a locker-room presence, but there's enough speed and athleticism remaining for this to be a formidable group. The bellcow is weakside linebacker Telvin Smith, who signed a four-year contract extension in October and is coming off a Pro Bowl season. Myles Jack is fully healthy now and can play the middle or outside, but he was groomed to fill Posluszny's spot in the middle. The sideline-to-sideline speed of Smith and Jack means they never come off the field, so their responsibility will be far greater than whoever emerges as the strongside starter. The third linebacker, possibly Blair Brown or free-agent acquisition Donald Payne, will only play on 30-40 percent of the snaps in a base defense. Any injury to Smith or Jack could be detrimental due to shaky depth.

SECONDARY: An eyesore for so many years, the Jacksonville secondary was arguably the toughest unit to throw against last season. The Jaguars allowed an NFL-low 169.9 yards per game and opposing quarterbacks had an abysmal 68.5 rating. It was rare for an opposing QB to test Pro Bowl cornerback Jalen Ramsey, and A.J. Bouye on the opposite side snagged six interceptions, the most for any Jacksonville defensive back since Rashean Mathis in 2006. With Aaron Colvin lost in free agency to the Houston Texans, the vital role of third corner will likely fall on free-agent signee D.J. Hayden, though he could get some competition from a rookie or second-year man Jalen Myrick.

At safety, Tashaun Gipson, who was much improved last season after a disappointing 2016, is expected to pair up again with Barry Church. They combined for eight interceptions last season. Third-round draft pick Ronnie Harrison might be another year away from taking somebody's job. Don Carey,

THE LAST TIME ...

... a Jacksonville player led the league in receptions was 1999 when **Jimmy Smith** hauled in 116 passes for 1,636 yards in helping the Jaguars go 14-2 and win an AFC Central title. Beginning in 1996, the second-round pick from Jackson State led the team in receiving for 10 straight years and played a key role in the Jags reaching the playoffs in five of those seasons.

IMPACT NEWCOMER

Acquiring the best offensive lineman available in free agency on a five-year, $66.5 million deal in **Andrew Norwell** fit perfectly for the Jaguars' run-heavy attack. Norwell (6-6, 325 pounds) will plug in on the left side between Cam Robinson and Brandon Linder, which likely means a heavy dose of Leonard Fournette runs in that direction. Look for Norwell to not only be a mauling presence on the O-line, but a take-charge leader like Calais Campbell was for the defensive line after he came over last year from Arizona. For the first time since 2006, the Jaguars may not have an immediate starter out of the draft.

Jarrod Wilson and Cody Davis must be core players on special teams to secure a backup spot.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The Jaguars devoted a good portion of free agency to beefing up their special teams. They signed tight end Niles Paul, plus Carey and Davis, hoping to fortify coverage units that were 13th in kickoff (20.4 yards per runback) and 16th in punt (7.6) returns last year.

Kicker Josh Lambo was a big difference-maker as he converted 23 of 24 field goals and made his last 15 attempts. Punter Brad Nortman had a disappointing season and was released three days after the Jaguars selected Mississippi State's Logan Cooke in the seventh round of April's draft to replace him.

Jaydon Mickens provided a spark as a punt returner, while Grant averaged 24.9 yards on kick returns.

BOTTOM LINE

All signs point to the Jaguars being a playoff team again, but the schedule is considerably tougher than last season. A huge burden will be on the defense and running game to carry the Jags, but it's incumbent upon Bortles to make occasional big plays and keep turnovers to a minimum. Bortles and the Jaguars want to prove they have what it takes to be a perennial AFC contender like Coughlin's teams were in the late 1990s. The defense might allow them to do it.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B+
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

SMITH: DAVID ZALUBOWSKI / AP; NORWELL: BOB LEVERONE / AP

↘ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **TE** Austin Seferian-Jenkins (free agent, N.Y. Jets)
- **TE** Niles Paul (free agent, Washington)
- **CB** D.J. Hayden (free agent, Detroit)
- **QB** Cody Kessler (trade, Cleveland)
- **OG** Andrew Norwell (free agent, Carolina)
- **S** Don Carey (free agent, Detroit)

Niles Paul

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

Nobody saw the Jaguars taking a defensive lineman in the first round, so **Taven Bryan** gives them an embarrassment of riches in that position group. Bryan is an ideal three-technique tackle who can also play outside, so that versatility and his value was appealing over needs at tight end and O-line. The Jaguars got a much-needed big target in wide receiver D.J. Chark, who averaged 21.9 yards per catch (40 catches, 874 yards) at LSU last season and also gives the team a legitimate punt-return contender. Like the first round with Bryan, the third-round pick of Alabama safety Ronnie Harrison provides depth on the back end, possibly as a replacement for Church or Gipson in 2019. Will Richardson, who played right tackle at N.C. State and went against elite pass rushers Bradley Chubb and Kentavius Street on a regular basis in practice, must convince the Jaguars that his off-the-field issues involving DWI and marijuana are behind him.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
B

↘ THE JAGUARS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	29	Taven Bryan	DL	6-5	291	21	Florida
2	61	D.J. Chark	WR	6-4	198	21	LSU
3	93	Ronnie Harrison	S	6-3	214	21	Alabama
4	129	Will Richardson	T	6-6	303	22	N.C. State
6	203	Tanner Lee	QB	6-4	220	23	Nebraska
7	230	Leon Jacobs	DE	6-2	245	23	Wisconsin
7	247	Logan Cooke	P	6-5	200	22	Mississippi State

↘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Doug Marrone, **Head Coach;** Nathaniel Hackett, **Offensive Coordinator;** Todd Wash, **Defensive Coordinator;** Joe DeCamillis, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
5 Bortles, Blake	QB	6-5	236	26	5	UCF
6 Kessler, Cody	QB	6-1	215	25	3	USC

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
60 Cann, A.J.	OL	6-3	315	26	4	South Carolina
66 Gennesy, Avery	OL	6-5	318	24	1	Texas A&M
65 Linder, Brandon	OL	6-6	315	26	5	Miami (Fla.)
68 Norwell, Andrew	G	6-6	325	26	5	Ohio State
78 Parnell, Jermey	OL	6-6	326	32	8	Ole Miss
75 Poehls, William	T	6-8	344	26	1	Montana
64 Reed, Chris	OL	6-5	310	26	3	Minnesota State
74 Robinson, Cam	OL	6-6	320	22	2	Alabama
69 Shatley, Tyler	OL	6-3	310	27	4	Clemson
70 Thomas, Brandon	OL	6-3	317	27	2	Clemson
73 Walker, Josh	OL	6-5	330	27	4	Middle Tennessee
72 Wells, Josh	OL	6-6	306	27	4	James Madison

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
45 Atkins, Lamar	FB	5-11	216	24	1	Louisville
40 Bohanon, Tommy	FB	6-1	246	28	5	Wake Forest
41 Cook, Tim	RB	6-0	242	24	1	Oregon State
27 Fournette, Leonard	RB	6-0	228	23	2	LSU
30 Grant, Corey	RB	5-11	203	26	4	Auburn
38 Wilds, Brandon	RB	6-0	220	25	1	South Carolina
24 Yeldon, T.J.	RB	6-1	223	24	4	Alabama

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
84 Cole, Keelan	WR	6-1	194	25	2	Kentucky Wesleyan
13 Greene Sr., Rashad	WR	5-11	186	25	4	Florida State
86 Grinnage, David	TE	6-5	265	24	1	N.C. State
83 Koyack, Ben	TE	6-5	258	25	3	Notre Dame
11 Lee, Marqise	WR	6-0	196	26	5	USC
85 Mickens, Jaydon	WR	5-11	170	24	2	Washington
15 Moncrief, Donte	WR	6-2	220	25	5	Ole Miss
80 O'Shaughnessy, James	TE	6-4	245	26	4	Illinois State
81 Paul, Niles	TE	6-1	242	29	8	Nebraska
88 Seferian-Jenkins, Austin	TE	6-5	262	25	5	Washington
Smith, Tevaun	WR	6-2	197	25	1	Iowa
10 Strong, Jaelen	WR	6-2	220	24	4	Arizona State
12 Westbrook, Dede	WR	6-0	178	24	2	Oklahoma
14 Wynn, Shane	WR	5-6	168	25	3	Indiana

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
54 Ankou, Eli	DT	6-3	325	24	2	UCLA
96 Bennett, Michael	DT	6-2	287	25	4	Ohio State
93 Campbell, Calais	DL	6-8	300	32	11	Miami (Fla.)
99 Dareus, Marcell	DL	6-3	331	28	8	Alabama
79 Dimick, Hunter	DE	6-3	268	24	1	Utah
56 Fowler Jr., Dante	DE	6-3	255	24	4	Florida
97 Jackson, Malik	DL	6-5	290	28	7	Tennessee
95 Jones, Abry	DT	6-4	318	27	6	Georgia
98 Lewis-Moore, Kapron	DL	6-4	315	28	4	Notre Dame
91 Ngakoue, Yannick	DE	6-2	246	23	3	Maryland
59 Phillips, Carroll	DE	6-3	242	26	2	Illinois
94 Smoot, Dawuane	DE	6-3	264	23	2	Illinois

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
53 Brown, Blair	LB	6-0	238	24	2	Ohio
57 Ellis, Brooks	LB	6-2	245	23	1	Arkansas
44 Jack, Myles	LB	6-1	244	23	3	UCLA
58 King, Deon	LB	6-2	220	25	3	Norfolk State
55 McCray, Lerentee	LB	6-3	249	28	6	Florida
52 Payne, Donald	LB	5-11	217	24	2	Stetson
50 Smith, Telvin	LB	6-3	215	27	5	Florida State

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
21 Bouye, A.J.	CB	6-0	191	27	6	UCF
22 Carey, Don	S	5-11	202	31	10	Norfolk State
42 Church, Barry	S	6-2	218	30	9	Toledo
35 Davis, Cody	S	6-2	203	29	6	Texas Tech
39 Gipson, Tashaun	S	5-11	212	28	7	Wyoming
25 Hayden, D.J.	CB	5-11	190	28	6	Houston
36 McDougle, Dexter	CB	5-10	195	27	4	Maryland
38 Miller, Charlie	S	6-1	190	24	1	Dartmouth
31 Myrick, Jalen	CB	5-11	200	23	2	Minnesota
23 Patmon, Tyler	CB	5-10	188	27	4	Oklahoma State
20 Ramsey, Jalen	CB	6-2	208	23	3	Florida State
29 Seamster, Sammy	CB	6-0	205	27	2	Middle Tennessee
26 Wilson, Jarrod	S	6-2	210	24	3	Michigan

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
49 Holba, Colin	LS	6-4	248	24	2	Louisville
4 Lambo, Josh	K	6-0	216	27	4	Texas A&M
46 Tinker, Carson	LS	6-0	237	28	6	Alabama

TENNESSEE
TITANS

Delanie Walker, TE

WALKER: JEFF HAYNES / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 9
@ Miami	Houston	@ Jacksonville	Philadelphia	@ Buffalo	Baltimore	@ L.A. Chargers*	@ Dallas
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 21 / 9:30 AM	Nov. 5 / 8:15 PM

2017 RECORD
OVERALL: 9-7 **HOME:** 6-2
CONFERENCE: 8-4 **DIVISION:** 5-1

HEAD COACH **MIKE VRABEL** (FIRST YEAR)
CAREER RECORD: 0-0

▶ **ONLINE:** www.titansonline.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @Titans
▶ **TICKETS:** 615-565-4200
▶ **STADIUM:** Nissan Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 69,143
▶ **TURF:** Grass

Titans need Mariota to become a more efficient playmaker to get to 10 wins

BY JOHN GLENNON
The (Nashville) Tennessean

The Tennessee Titans took two big steps forward over the past couple seasons under former head coach Mike Mularkey.

It's now time to see if new coach Mike Vrabel can build upon that momentum. The Titans recorded their first playoff victory since 2004 when they downed Kansas City in the wild-card round last season, one year after producing the team's first winning record in half a decade.

Vrabel inherits a team that appears to be on the rise, with good, young talent on both sides of the ball. But in order to improve on last year's second straight 9-7 finish, the Titans will likely need quarterback Marcus Mariota to return to the efficient, effective playmaker he was before suffering through a subpar 2017.

2
PREDICTED FINISH AFC SOUTH

OFFENSE

This will be Matt LaFleur's first tour of duty as a playcaller, but as the Rams' offensive coordinator last season, he was part of the reason the team made huge strides. They went from last to first in points per game and from last to 10th in total offense. LaFleur's teams have made play-action a staple of their success, using it much more than the Titans did last season. He has boosted the careers of quarterbacks Robert Griffin III, Matt Ryan and Jared Goff.

QUARTERBACKS: Mariota hopes to trend upward again after taking steps backward in several statistical categories in 2017. Mariota threw for a career-low 13 touchdowns and a career-high 15 interceptions last season, finishing with a career-worst quarterback rating of 79.3. On the plus side, he improved down the stretch, throwing for seven touchdowns and two interceptions in the last five contests—which included two playoff games. Mariota also ran for a career-best five touchdowns, but was slowed for a significant portion of the season by a hamstring strain that sidelined him for one game. Mariota's numbers should improve this year under a proven quarterback booster—new offensive coordinator LaFleur—as well as the increased experience of young receivers like Corey Davis and Taywan Taylor. The Titans improved at backup quarterback, adding Blaine Gabbert and parting ways with Matt Cassel. That could be important, as Mariota has often been impacted by injuries.

RUNNING BACKS: The Titans will have a much different look here in 2018 following the release of DeMarco Murray and the addition of former Patriots back

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Marcus Mariota
	Blaine Gabbert
RB	Derrick Henry
	Dion Lewis
LT	Taylor Lewan
	Dennis Kelly
LG	Quinton Spain
	Xavier Su'a-Filo
C	Ben Jones
	Corey Levin
RG	Josh Kline
	Kevin Pamphile
RT	Jack Conklin
	Tyler Marz
TE	Delanie Walker
	Phillip Supernaw
TE	Jonnu Smith
	Luke Stocker
WR	Corey Davis
	Tajae Sharpe
WR	Rishard Matthews
	Taywan Taylor

DEFENSE

DE	DaQuan Jones
	David King
NT	Austin Johnson
	Bennie Logan
DT	Jurrell Casey
	Julius Warmsley
OLB	Derrick Morgan
	Kevin Dodd
ILB	Wesley Woodyard
	Will Compton
ILB	Rashaan Evans
	Jayon Brown
OLB	Brian Orakpo
	Harold Landry
CB	Adoree' Jackson
	Malcolm Butler
CB	Logan Ryan
	LeShaun Sims
SS	Johnathan Cyprien
	Brynden Trawick
FS	Kevin Byard
	Denzel Johnson

SPECIALISTS

LS	Beau Brinkley
P	Brett Kern
K	Ryan Succop
KR	Adoree' Jackson
PR	Adoree' Jackson

BYE: WEEK 8 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *London **Game may be flexed to Saturday, Dec. 22.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
New England	@ Indianapolis	@ Houston	N.Y. Jets	Jacksonville	@ N.Y. Giants	Washington	Indianapolis
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 26 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 2 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 6 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23** / TBD**	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

TENNESSEE **TITANS**

Marcus Mariota, QB

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
30-50

PL

7-9	2-14	3-13	9-7	9-7
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
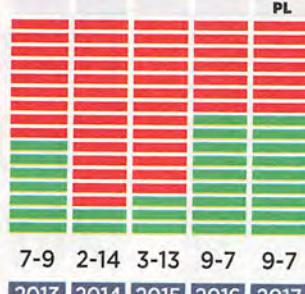
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

Dion Lewis. The immediate impact of Murray's departure is a step up in the responsibilities of Derrick Henry, who gained 744 yards in part-time duty last season. Henry showed his explosive ability in 2017 with touchdown runs of 72 and 75 yards, but he needs to be more consistent about taking what the defense allows–as opposed to trying to bounce too many carries outside in search of home-run plays. Henry could also improve in the passing game, both catching and blocking. Lewis should be an excellent complement, provided he can stay healthy. He had a career year in 2017, rushing for 896 yards, catching 32 passes and totaling nine touchdowns. Lewis also played in all 16 games, a big change from the previous two years when knee injuries limited him to a combined 14 games.

RECEIVERS: This was a problem spot for the Titans in 2017, as none of the team's wide receivers caught 60 passes or totaled 800 yards. Part of the problem was injuries, as Tajae Sharpe missed the entire season and rookie Davis–the fifth overall pick of the draft–was out the majority of the offseason as well as five regular-season contests. Davis showed flashes of talent, especially toward the end when he caught 15 passes in four games. A healthy offseason should do wonders for Davis and Sharpe. The Titans remain intrigued in speedy second-year receiver Taylor, who didn't catch on well as a rookie. Tennessee's top wide receiver remains Rishard Matthews, who has averaged nearly 15 yards per reception in two years and grabbed 13 touchdown passes. But tight end Delanie Walker, who'll be 34 years old in August,

has been most reliable, posting at least 60 receptions in five straight seasons.

OFFENSIVE LINE: After a tremendous 2016, one in which the Titans allowed just 28 sacks and averaged a robust 4.6 yards per rush, the team's offensive line suffered a setback. Despite returning the same personnel, Tennessee's O-line surrendered 35 sacks and saw the team's rushing average drop to 4.1 yards in 2017. In addition, Titans' quarterbacks were hit 71 times, up from 51 in 2016. The biggest problems were on the interior, as guards Quinton Spain and Josh Kline as well as center Ben Jones weren't as strong as they they had been a year earlier. Spain could get pushed for a starting role this year by either of two free-agent signees–Kevin Pamphile or Xavier Su'a-Filo. Titans tackles Taylor Lewan and Jack Conklin are two of the best in

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Titans

"Dion Lewis will be a good complement to **Derrick Henry**. I think Henry is a good power back. He has some limitations, but he's going to be productive because he runs the ball so hard. ... (Marcus) Mariota is a guy who has to be on the move to be effective. I don't know if he'll ever be a straight five- or seven-step guy because I don't know if physically he can handle that type of game. He's better when

he gets to move around and create, give his guys more chance for separation. As a whole, he's still a really good quarterback. ... I like the secondary. They've got a nice group together now with the addition of (Malcolm) Butler. (Kevin) Byard's got a great chance to make plays because of his nose for the ball. The pass rush has to get a little more consistent on the edges. If they can get a little more consistent with pressure, it will give (the secondary) a chance to make more plays."

Wesley Woodyard
5.0 sacks

⬊ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	16-26	Oakland Raiders
09/17	W	37-16	Jacksonville Jaguars
09/24	W	33-27	Seattle Seahawks
10/01	L	14-57	Houston Texans
10/08	L	10-16	Miami Dolphins
10/16	W	36-22	Indianapolis Colts
10/22	W	12-9	Cleveland Browns
11/05	W	23-20	Baltimore Ravens
11/12	W	24-20	Cincinnati Bengals
11/16	L	17-40	Pittsburgh Steelers
11/26	W	20-16	Indianapolis Colts
12/03	W	24-13	Houston Texans
12/10	L	7-12	Arizona Cardinals
12/17	L	23-25	San Francisco 49ers
12/24	L	23-27	Los Angeles Rams
12/31	W	15-10	Jacksonville Jaguars
2017 RECORD: 9-7			

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Murray	184	659	3.6	75t	6
Henry	176	744	4.2	75t	5
Mariota	60	312	5.2	34t	5
Taylor	8	43	5.4	17	0
Jackson	5	55	11.0	20	0
Fluellen	4	21	5.3	10	0
Fowler	2	4	2.0	3t	1
Walker	2	-2	-1.0	1t	1
Weems	1	0	0.0	0	0
Matthews	1	-3	-3.0	-3	0
TENNESSEE	**443**	**1,833**	**4.1**	**75t**	**18**
OPPONENTS	**398**	**1,420**	**3.6**	**34**	**5**

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Walker	74	807	10.9	42	3
Decker	54	563	10.4	29	1
Matthews	53	795	15.0	75t	4
Murray	39	266	6.8	18	1
Davis	34	375	11.0	37	0
Smith	18	157	8.7	32t	2
Taylor	16	231	14.4	53t	1
Henry	11	136	12.4	66t	1
Supernaw	4	39	9.8	20	1
Stocker	1	12	12.0	12	0
Douglas	1	8	8.0	8	0
Weems	1	5	5.0	5	0
TENNESSEE	**306**	**3,394**	**11.1**	**75t**	**14**
OPPONENTS	**369**	**4,100**	**11.1**	**80t**	**27**

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Mariota	453	281	3,232	13	15
Cassel	42	25	162	1	2
Decker	1	0	0	0	0
TENNESSEE	**496**	**306**	**3,191**	**14**	**17**
OPPONENTS	**605**	**369**	**3,828**	**27**	**12**

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Jackson	25	578	23.1	57	0
Weems	2	18	9.0	18	0
Decker	1	22	22.0	22	0
TENNESSEE	**28**	**618**	**22.1**	**57**	**0**
OPPONENTS	**32**	**750**	**23.4**	**60**	**0**

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Jackson	34	290	8.5	46	0
Weems	2	15	7.5	13	0
TENNESSEE	**36**	**305**	**8.5**	**46**	**0**
OPPONENTS	**40**	**286**	**7.2**	**23**	**0**

SACKS   **TENNESSEE 43.0, OPPONENTS 35.0**

Morgan 7.5, Orakpo 7.0, Casey 6.0, Woodyard 5.0, Walden 4.0, Jones 3.5, Williamson 3.0, Brown 1.5, Klug 1.5, Cyprien 1.0, Johnson 1.0, King 1.0

⬊ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	314.0	23
Rushing	114.6	15
Passing	199.4	23
Scoring	20.9	18
Punt returns	8.5	16
Kick returns	22.1	13
Red zone TD%	54.6	14t
Total defense	328.0	13
Against rush	88.8	4
Against pass	239.2	25
Points allowed	22.2	17
Interceptions	12	18t
Sacks	43.0	5t
Turnover diff.	-4	23t

the business, pillars of the franchise. But Conklin could potentially start the regular season on the PUP list as he recovers from a torn ACL.

DEFENSE

Defensive coordinator Dean Pees spent the last six years in that role for Baltimore, where three of his teams–in 2014, 2015 and 2016–finished among the league's top 10 in defense. In 2017, the Ravens posted league highs of three shutouts and 34 takeaways. He's expected to keep the Titans' base 3-4 defense in place. Considering Vrabel's background as a player/position coach, it's a good bet the team's linebackers will get plenty of chances to shine.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Three-time Pro Bowl defensive lineman Jurrell Casey is the standout here, as he's tough to move on running plays and has also contributed at least five sacks in each of his past four seasons. Durable and effective, Casey has only missed two games in seven years. On the other side of the line, the Titans made a wise move in re-signing 6-4, 322-pound DaQuan Jones, an imposing run defender who chipped in 3.5 sacks last season. The question mark for Tennessee is in the middle, where Austin Johnson now sits atop the depth chart after starting three games in his first two campaigns. He could be pushed by free-agent addition Bennie Logan, a starter his last four years in the league–three in Philadelphia and one in Kansas City. David King provides some veteran depth on the outside, while

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Tennessee head coach Mike Vrabel

We'll get our first peek at what a Vrabel team will look like, but the 42-year-old head coach can point to a number of impressive influences. He began playing under Pittsburgh's Bill Cowher, won three Super Bowls playing for New England's Bill Belichick, served as an Ohio State assistant for three years under Urban Meyer and spent the last four seasons in Houston learning from Bill O'Brien and Romeo Crennel. Vrabel will likely keep the Titans' defense in the 3-4 base system. But he's said he wants "coverage consistency and front multiplicity," so expect movement up front. Offensively, new coordinator Matt LaFleur will likely call much of the show, but Vrabel will step in from time to time.

TENNESSEE **TITANS**

Antwaun Woods is a versatile big body.

LINEBACKERS: The Titans received productive 2017 seasons out of edge rushers Derrick Morgan and Brian Orakpo, who combined for 14.5 sacks, as well as inside linebacker Wesley Woodyard, who led the team with 124 tackles and had 5.0 sacks. But since both Orakpo and Woodyard will turn 32 before the start of this season—and since Morgan will be 29—the Titans must start developing some young talent. Inside linebacker Avery Williamson was effective against the run during his four years for the Titans—he totaled more than 100 tackles in two of those seasons—but his shortcomings against the pass were likely why the team let him walk. Jayon Brown showed good pass-coverage ability during his rookie season, so he's likely to see more action this year. This season could well be the last chance for outside linebacker Kevin Dodd, who hasn't shown much after the Titans made him the 33rd overall pick in the 2016 draft.

SECONDARY: The future looks promising here, as second-year safety Kevin Byard earned All-Pro recognition after tying for first in the NFL with eight interceptions. In addition, cornerbacks Adoree' Jackson and Logan Ryan represented upgrades over their predecessors. But the Titans were still too leaky in pass coverage last season, allowing 239.2 yards per contest—that ranked 25th in the league—and surrendering 27 touchdowns, tied for the eighth most in the NFL. So the Titans made another big acquisition during the offseason, signing free-agent cornerback Malcolm Butler away from the Patriots. Assuming Butler can bounce back from last season's surprise benching in the Super Bowl, he and Jackson will likely focus on the outside, with Ryan more likely to be a slot corner. Johnathan Cyprien returns for a second season at strong safety, while a number of young corners—LeShaun Sims, Kalan Reed and Tye Smith—will vie for playing time.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Kicker Ryan Succop got a five-year deal after producing career highs of 35 field goals and 136 points in 2017. But Succop wasn't

IMPACT NEWCOMER

Malcolm Butler will be a welcome addition for a defense that finished 25th last season against the pass, allowing almost 240 yards per game through the air. He's a former teammate of Logan Ryan's, which should ease his transition. Butler played more than 1,000 defensive snaps in New England last season and he'll be a regular on the field this year as well.

as accurate as he's been in years past, missing seven of 42 attempts on field goals—the most misses he'd ever suffered in his nine-year career. Punter Brett Kern, meanwhile, had the best season of his 10-year career, earning his first trip to the Pro Bowl after leading the NFL with a 49.7-yard gross average and 44.6-yard net average. Rookie cornerback Jackson showed several flashes of potential in returning both kicks and punts, but the Titans didn't produce any touchdown returns and wound up in the middle of the NFL pack in both departments. Some good free-agent signings during the previous offseason should help the Titans improve significantly on their 2017 punt coverage, which should be a strength once more.

BOTTOM LINE

There are plenty of reasons to believe the Titans could once again contend for the AFC South crown, thanks to a good core of young talent on both sides of the ball. The biggest key will be getting a rebound season from Mariota, who will be playing for his third head coach and fourth offensive coordinator in four years. The Titans must also get more production from former first-round wide receiver Davis, who was hampered by injury last year. Tennessee's secondary should be much better with Butler. All eyes will be on Vrabel, who has risen quickly through the ranks, spending just one season as a coordinator.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B
2018 STOCKWATCH: OUTPERFORM

THE LAST TIME ...

Oilers fans show Haywood Jeffires their appreciation after the team's final game in Houston prior to its move to Tennessee.

... a player for the Titans' franchise hit triple digits in catches for a season was 1991, when **Haywood Jeffires** had an even 100 receptions for 1,181 yards and seven touchdowns for the division-winning Houston Oilers. As part of coordinator Kevin Gilbride's run-and-shoot attack, Jeffires helped Houston lead the NFL in passing offense—and it wasn't even close. Behind future Hall-of-Fame quarterback Warren Moon, the Oilers piled up 4,621 yards in receptions, with the 49ers a distant second at 3,997.

↘ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **CB** Malcolm Butler
  (free agent, New England)
- **OG** Xavier Su'a-Filo
  (free agent, Houston)
- **QB** Blaine Gabbert
  (free agent, Arizona)
- **OL** Kevin Pamphile
  (free agent, Tampa Bay)
- **RB** Dion Lewis
  (free agent, New England)
- **DT** Bennie Logan
  (free agent, Kansas City)

Dion Lewis

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Titans didn't necessarily enter the draft with any glaring needs, but they addressed their most pressing concern—linebackers—with their first two picks. Former Alabama standout **Rashaan Evans** is a three-down linebacker with impressive pass-rushing skills from the inside position. His 29 total quarterback pressures last season ranked second in the nation, according to Pro Football Focus. Harold Landry's senior season didn't match his junior year at Boston College, but assuming he's at full health, he should add another valuable pass-rushing chess piece for coordinator Dean Pees. Landry piled up 16.5 sacks and 22.0 tackles for loss during his junior season.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
A-
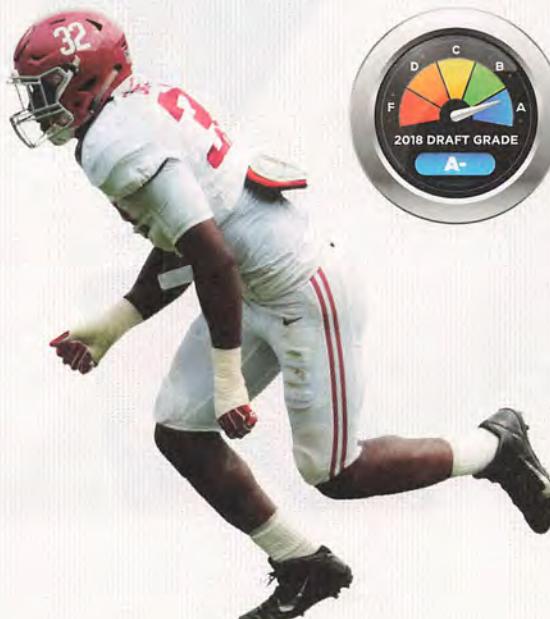
↘ THE TITANS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	22	Rashaan Evans	LB	6-3	232	21	Alabama
2	41	Harold Landry	LB	6-2	252	22	Boston College
5	152	Dane Cruikshank	S	6-1	209	23	Arizona
6	199	Luke Falk	QB	6-4	214	23	Washington State

↘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Mike Vrabel, **Head Coach;** Matt LaFleur, **Offensive Coordinator;** Dean Pees, **Defensive Coordinator;** Craig Aukerman, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
5 Ferguson, Tyler	QB	6-2	224	24	1	Western Kentucky
7 Gabbert, Blaine	QB	6-4	235	28	8	Missouri
8 Mariota, Marcus	QB	6-4	222	24	4	Oregon
11 Tanney, Alex	QB	6-4	220	30	3	Monmouth (Ill.)

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
78 Conklin, Jack	T	6-6	308	24	3	Michigan State
60 Jones, Ben	C	6-3	308	29	7	Georgia
71 Kelly, Dennis	G/T	6-8	321	28	7	Purdue
64 Kline, Josh	G	6-3	300	28	6	Kent State
61 Levin, Corey	G/C	6-4	307	24	2	Chattanooga
77 Lewan, Taylor	T	6-7	309	27	5	Michigan
69 Marz, Tyler	T	6-7	316	26	2	Wisconsin
66 Pamphile, Kevin	G	6-5	315	27	5	Purdue
67 Spain, Quinton	G	6-4	330	27	4	West Virginia
76 Su'a-Filo, Xavier	G	6-4	310	27	5	UCLA
68 Wichmann, Cody	OL	6-5	325	26	3	Fresno State

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
32 Fluellen, David	RB	5-11	224	26	2	Toledo
22 Henry, Derrick	RB	6-3	247	24	3	Alabama
33 Lewis, Dion	RB	5-8	195	27	7	Pittsburgh
29 Muhammad, Khalfani	RB	5-7	174	23	1	California

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
10 Campanaro, Michael	WR	5-9	191	27	5	Wake Forest
84 Davis, Corey	WR	6-3	209	23	2	Western Michigan
15 Jennings, Darius	WR	5-10	180	26	2	Virginia
18 Matthews, Rishard	WR	6-0	217	28	7	Nevada
16 Pascal, Zach	WR	6-2	219	23	1	Old Dominion
85 Semisch, Tim	TE	6-8	275	26	1	Northern Illinois
19 Sharpe, Tajae	WR	6-2	194	23	3	Massachusetts
81 Smith, Jonnu	TE	6-3	248	23	2	Florida International
88 Stocker, Luke	TE	6-5	253	30	8	Tennessee
89 Supernaw, Phillip	TE	6-5	255	28	5	Ouachita Baptist
13 Taylor, Taywan	WR	5-11	203	23	2	Western Kentucky
82 Walker, Delanie	TE	6-2	248	34	13	Central Missouri State

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
99 Casey, Jurrell	DT	6-1	305	28	8	USC
94 Johnson, Austin	DL	6-4	314	24	3	Penn State
90 Jones, DaQuan	DL	6-4	322	26	5	Penn State
95 King, David	DE	6-4	281	28	3	Oklahoma
96 Logan, Bennie	DT	6-2	315	28	6	LSU
70 Maxey, Johnny	DE	6-5	283	24	1	Mars Hill
72 Warmsley, Julius	DE	6-2	297	28	2	Tulane
97 Woods, Antwaun	DT	6-1	318	25	1	USC

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
53 Bates, Daren	LB	5-11	225	27	6	Auburn
55 Brown, Jayon	LB	6-0	226	23	2	UCLA
44 Carraway, Josh	LB	6-3	242	24	2	TCU
51 Compton, Will	LB	6-1	235	28	5	Nebraska
93 Dodd, Kevin	LB	6-5	277	26	3	Clemson
91 Morgan, Derrick	LB	6-4	261	29	9	Georgia Tech
98 Orakpo, Brian	LB	6-4	257	32	10	Texas
50 Palmer, Nate	LB	6-2	248	28	6	Illinois State
52 Wallace, Aaron	LB	6-2	242	25	3	UCLA
59 Woodyard, Wesley	LB	6-0	233	32	11	Kentucky

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
39 Boykins, Jeremy	CB	6-1	183	23	1	UCF
21 Butler, Malcolm	CB	5-11	190	28	5	West Alabama
31 Byard, Kevin	S	6-0	212	25	3	Middle Tennessee
37 Cyprien, Johnathan	S	6-0	223	28	6	Florida International
20 Hurst, Demontre	CB	5-10	191	27	4	Oklahoma
25 Jackson, Adoree'	CB	5-11	185	22	2	USC
42 Johnson, Denzel	S	6-0	198	23	1	TCU
24 Reed, Kalan	CB	5-11	192	24	2	Southern Miss
26 Ryan, Logan	CB	5-11	195	27	6	Rutgers
36 Sims, LeShaun	CB	6-0	203	24	3	Southern Utah
23 Smith, Tye	CB	6-0	195	25	3	Towson
41 Trawick, Brynden	S	6-2	225	28	6	Troy

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
48 Brinkley, Beau	LS	6-4	260	28	7	Missouri
6 Kern, Brett	P	6-2	214	32	11	Toledo
4 Succop, Ryan	K	6-2	218	31	10	South Carolina

HOUSTON
TEXANS

Deshaun Watson, QB

WATSON: STEPHEN BRASHEAR / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
@ New England	**@ Tennessee**	**N.Y. Giants**	**@ Indianapolis**	**Dallas**	**Buffalo**	**@ Jacksonville**	**Miami**
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 25 / 8:20 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 4-12 **HOME:** 3-5
CONFERENCE: 3-9 **DIVISION:** 1-5

HEAD COACH **BILL O'BRIEN** (FIFTH YEAR, 31-33)
CAREER RECORD: 31-33

▶ **ONLINE:** www.houstontexans.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @HoustonTexans
▶ **TICKETS:** 832-667-2002
▶ **STADIUM:** NRG Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 71,795
▶ **TURF:** FieldTurf

If the Texans are to contend, it's really elementary— Watson must be 100 percent

BY JOHN MCCLAIN
Houston Chronicle

For the first time in Bill O'Brien's four seasons as coach, the Texans had a losing record. Not surprising since they were depleted by injuries, finishing with 20 players on injured reserve, including 13 starters.

Losing defensive end J.J. Watt and outside linebacker Whitney Mercilus for the season in the same game derailed the defense, but when rookie quarterback Deshaun Watson went down in practice with a season-ending knee injury, the Texans cratered and finished 4-12. Owner Bob McNair recognized the issues and rewarded O'Brien with a four-year extension. He replaced general manager Rick Smith with his former right-hand man, Brian Gaine, who returned from Buffalo to oversee the personnel side of the organization.

What they need more than anything is better luck with injuries. If this team can stay healthy, especially Watson, they're capable of winning the AFC South for the third time in four seasons. For a team that has a lot of talented players, there are still a lot of holes that must be filled.

OFFENSE

Expect four new starters on an offensive line that was awful. When Watson was healthy, the offense was terrific, averaging 34.7 points in his six starts. O'Brien oversees the game plan, calls plays and is Watson's primary coach. Watson's mobility covered up injuries on the line, at receiver, tight end and in the backfield. Without Watson, the offense was almost helpless. Gaine added players to improve the speed on offense.

QUARTERBACKS: In Watson's last five starts before suffering a season-ending torn ACL in practice, the Texans averaged 39 points. He's expected to be 100 percent in training camp. Watson threw 19 touchdown passes in seven games, more than any quarterback in history in his first seven contests. He was on pace for 43 scoring passes. Unlike his predecessor, Brock Osweiler, Watson developed a solid working relationship with O'Brien. Together, O'Brien and Watson were creative in taking advantage of the quarterback's mobility. They used a lot of motion, fakes and misdirection in the backfield to create confusion on defense. Watson worked hard to become a consistently effective pocket passer and improved in that area, and they employed designed runs to keep the defense off balance. Now that Watson has a season and offseason working with O'Brien, there's no telling how good he can be if he stays healthy.

3 PREDICTED FINISH AFC SOUTH

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Deshaun Watson
	Brandon Weeden
FB	Jay Prosch
RB	Lamar Miller
	D'Onta Foreman
LT	Julién Davenport
	Kendall Lamm
LG	Zach Fulton
	David Quessenberry
C	Nick Martin
	Greg Mancz
RG	Senio Kelemete
	Kyle Fuller
RT	Seantrel Henderson
	Martinas Rankin
TE	Ryan Griffin
	Stephen Anderson
WR	DeAndre Hopkins
	Bruce Ellington
WR	Will Fuller V
	Braxton Miller

DEFENSE
DE	J.J. Watt
	Joel Heath
NT	D.J. Reader
	Brandon Dunn
DE	Christian Covington
	Carlos Watkins
OLB	Whitney Mercilus
	Brennan Scarlett
ILB	Benardrick McKinney
	Brian Peters
ILB	Zach Cunningham
	Dylan Cole
OLB	Jadeveon Clowney
	Ufomba Kamalu
CB	Aaron Colvin
	Kareem Jackson
CB	Johnathan Joseph
	Kevin Johnson
SS	Tyrann Mathieu
	Corey Moore
FS	Andre Hal
	Kurtis Drummond

SPECIALISTS
LS	Jon Weeks
P	Shane Lechler
K	Ka'imi Fairbairn
KR	Keke Coutee
PR	Will Fuller V

BYE: WEEK 10 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Game time to be released by Week 8.

Week 9
@ Denver
Nov. 4 / 4:05 PM

Week 11
@ Washington
Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM

Week 12
Tennessee
Nov. 26 / 8:15 PM

Week 13
Cleveland
Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM

Week 14
Indianapolis
Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM

Week 15
@ N.Y. Jets
Dec. 15 / TBD*

Week 16
@ Philadelphia
Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM

Week 17
Jacksonville
Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

HOUSTON **TEXANS**

Jadeveon Clowney, LB/DE

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
33-47

		PL	PL	
2-14	9-7	9-7	9-7	4-12
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

RUNNING BACKS: A good example of Watson's impact on the offense: When he went down in practice after the seventh game, the Texans were third in rushing; they finished in the middle of the pack. The offensive line was so horrendous there wasn't a lot of room to run for Lamar Miller and D'Onta Foreman.

The coaches hope the addition of four new starters up front will benefit a running game that was mostly anemic between the tackles. On his second touchdown run in a victory over Arizona, Foreman suffered a ruptured Achilles tendon. He's expected to be ready for the start of the season and could beat out Miller for the starting job. Miller, who rushed for 888 yards and averaged 3.7 a carry, hasn't provided breakaway speed. Houston has a running back-by-committee approach, but if the

233-pound Foreman wins the job, he'll get the heavy-duty carries and make the running game more productive.

RECEIVERS: DeAndre Hopkins was the only receiver the coaches could count on because the others couldn't stay healthy. He was voted first-team All-Pro for the first time after catching 96 passes for 1,378 yards and a league-leading 13 touchdowns. He was first with 17 receptions of at least 25 yards. It doesn't matter who plays quarterback, he's consistently outstanding. Hopkins lacks stopwatch speed, but he's smart, tough and has incredible hands. He fights for the ball and loves to get physical against double coverage.

Will Fuller V has blinding speed but can't stay on the field. Of the 13 passes he caught from Watson, seven went for touchdowns. Imagine what Fuller might be capable of doing with Watson if he

can avoid injuries. Bruce Ellington was a splendid addition in the slot, but he was hurt, a problem that's plagued his career. This is a make-or-break season for Braxton Miller.

OFFENSIVE LINE: When Watson was healthy, he covered up a lot of problems. When he was lost for the season, it was obvious just how bad the line was. Center Nick Martin is expected to be the only returning starter. New guards Zach Fulton and Senio Kelemete were signed in free agency. Seantrel Henderson, who started one game for Buffalo over the last two seasons, gets first shot at right tackle. The left tackle is Julién Davenport, a fourth-round pick who started four games as a rookie, including three on the left side. Because of injuries, ineptness and Duane Brown's holdout and subsequent trade to Seattle, the Texans started five left tackles in 2017. It's

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Texans

"Their fate is tied to (Deshaun) Watson. If he can't play, they're an average team at best. If he's healthy, he's capable of helping them beat anybody. When Watson's got the ball, the play's not over. A lot of what he did couldn't be coached. They did a good job of taking advantage of his strengths as a passer and runner. He's got great pocket awareness and

great instincts no matter where he is on the field. It would be criminal if they don't improve that line for him. I can't imagine how great that offense will be if Watson, **(DeAndre) Hopkins** and (Will) Fuller played a whole season together. On defense, the jury's out on (J.J.) Watt coming back and being anything close to what he used to be. They better improve in the secondary if they want to win. Their lack of speed was exposed without a pass rush."

Benardrick McKinney
3.0 sacks

2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	7-29	Jacksonville Jaguars
09/14	W	13-9	Cincinnati Bengals
09/24	L	33-36	New England Patriots
10/01	W	57-14	Tennessee Titans
10/08	L	34-42	Kansas City Chiefs
10/15	W	33-17	Cleveland Browns
10/29	L	38-41	Seattle Seahawks
11/05	L	14-20	Indianapolis Colts
11/12	L	7-33	Los Angeles Rams
11/19	W	31-21	Arizona Cardinals
11/27	L	16-23	Baltimore Ravens
12/03	L	13-24	Tennessee Titans
12/10	L	16-26	San Francisco 49ers
12/17	L	7-45	Jacksonville Jaguars
12/25	L	6-34	Pittsburgh Steelers
12/31	L	13-22	Indianapolis Colts

2017 RECORD: 4-12

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
L. Miller	238	888	3.7	21	3
Foreman	78	327	4.2	39	2
Blue	71	262	3.7	48	1
Watson	36	269	7.5	49t	2
Yates	5	51	10.2	15	0
A. Ellington	5	2	0.4	7	0
Ervin	4	12	3.0	6	0
Savage	4	2	0.5	3	0
B. Ellington	3	17	5.7	13	0
Fuller	2	9	4.5	5	0
Heinicke	1	2	2.0	2	0
B. Miller	1	1	1.0	1	0
HOUSTON	448	1,842	4.1	49t	8
OPPONENTS	440	1,747	4.0	75t	14

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Hopkins	96	1,378	14.4	72t	13
L. Miller	36	327	9.1	32	3
B. Ellington	29	330	11.4	35	2
Fuller	28	423	15.1	59t	7
Anderson	25	342	13.7	42	1
B. Miller	19	162	8.5	57	1
Fiedorowicz	14	127	9.1	15	0
Griffin	13	158	12.2	35	1
Ervin	8	38	4.8	7	0
Blue	7	54	7.7	14	0
Foreman	6	83	13.8	34	0
A. Ellington	6	72	12.0	29	0
Thompson	5	84	16.8	32	0
Prosch	4	31	7.8	18	0
White	1	24	24.0	24	0
Hamilton	1	8	8.0	8	0
Malleck	1	3	3.0	3	0
HOUSTON	299	3,644	12.2	72t	28
OPPONENTS	321	3,999	12.5	94t	30

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Savage	223	125	1,412	5	6
Watson	204	126	1,699	19	8
Yates	97	47	523	4	3
Heinicke	1	1	10	0	0
HOUSTON	525	299	3,278	28	17
OPPONENTS	501	321	3,799	30	11

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Thompson	17	369	21.7	42	0
Ervin	5	93	18.6	24	0
Todman	4	84	21.0	25	0
Foreman	1	12	12.0	12	0
HOUSTON	27	558	20.7	42	0
OPPONENTS	27	547	20.3	48	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Fuller	9	135	15.0	49	0
Ervin	8	60	7.5	21	0
Thompson	6	39	6.5	15	0
B. Ellington	5	47	9.4	21	0
White	4	3	0.8	3	0
B. Miller	3	12	4.0	8	0
HOUSTON	35	296	8.5	49	0
OPPONENTS	49	604	12.4	82t	1

SACKS HOUSTON 32.0, OPPONENTS 54.0

Clowney 9.5, McKinney 3.0, Kamalu 2.0, Pleasant 2.0, Scarlett 2.0, Cunningham 1.5, Cushing 1.5, Cole 1.0, Covington 1.0, Drummond 1.0, Gilchrist 1.0, Heath 1.0, Houston 1.0, Jackson 1.0, Lewis 1.0, Mercilus 1.0, Reader 1.0, Clements 0.5

2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	320.0	20
Rushing	115.1	14
Passing	204.9	21
Scoring	21.1	17
Punt returns	8.5	17
Kick returns	20.7	21
Red zone TD%	52.4	20
Total defense	346.6	20
Against rush	109.2	13
Against pass	237.4	24
Points allowed	27.2	32
Interceptions	11	20t
Sacks	32.0	23
Turnover diff.	-12	28

up to Mike Devlin, the O-line coach, to sort through this mess. If Watson is healthy, he'll make the linemen look better. With so many new players, it should take time for them to develop chemistry and communication.

DEFENSE

After spending a season as assistant head coach, Romeo Crennel resumes his duties as defensive coordinator. In 2016, his last season in charge of the defense, the Texans finished first. In 2017, Mike Vrabel was promoted and became the victim of free-agent departures, injuries and ineptitude. As a result, the Texans allowed more points than any team in the league. When Vrabel was hired as head coach by the Tennessee Titans, Crennel stepped back into the coordinator's role.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Watt has played in eight games over the last two seasons because of back and leg injuries. He's 29 and trying to regain the form that helped him be voted NFL Defensive Player of the Year three times. Nobody knows if he can reach that level. If he stays on the field, he can still be an excellent player. The

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Houston head coach Bill O'Brien

O'Brien enters his fifth season with a franchise quarterback, Deshaun Watson, who brings out his coach's creativity. He showed last season he can design game plans and call plays for mobile (Watson) and immobile (Tom Savage) quarterbacks. He's a demanding coach, and his players always play hard for him. He's a proponent of a productive running game. He needs to improve clock management. He wants to know what his coaches and players think. O'Brien welcomes their suggestions on and off the field because he's always looking for new ideas.

HOUSTON **TEXANS**

coaches love nose tackle D.J. Reader, who can also play end in the three-man front. Reader penetrates and stuffs the run. He has improved as a pass rusher. Right end Christian Covington was enjoying his best year in 2017 when he was lost for the season. Brandon Dunn was forced into the lineup at nose tackle because of injuries and played better than any time in his two seasons. End Carlos Watkins flashed his rookie campaign and showed pass-rush skills, but he needs to improve against the run. Houston must improve its depth up front so the line won't be decimated by injuries to the starters.

LINEBACKERS: Jadeveon Clowney plays outside in the 3-4 and drops to right end in passing situations. He was the team's best defensive player last season. He's exceptional against the run and is a relentless pass rusher. Mercilus, who starts opposite Clowney, suffered a torn bicep in the fifth game last year and was lost for the season. Brian Cushing, who started next to him, was suspended for 10 games. Mercilus is back. Cushing isn't. Cushing was released because two rookies—second-round pick Zach Cunningham and undrafted Dylan Cole—did a terrific job replacing him. Cunningham excels in coverage and improved against the run. Benardrick McKinney, Houston's leading tackler, is

6-4 and 260 pounds and shuts down the run as the other inside starter. He's a hard worker who must get better as a pass rusher. McKinney sometimes struggles in coverage against the faster backs, but he's a key member of the defense overall.

SECONDARY: Safety Tyrann Mathieu and cornerback Aaron Colvin are the most prominent free-agent additions. Colvin is an excellent slot corner who'll get a chance to start outside. He's quick and instinctive and plays the ball well. Competing for the other starting job are veterans Kevin Johnson and Johnathan Joseph. If Colvin stays outside, Kareem Jackson will play inside. Mathieu starts next to veteran Andre Hal unless rookie Justin Reid can unseat Hal. One reason the coaches like Mathieu is because of his versatility and leadership, but he's got to stay healthy. The Texans used their top draft pick (third round) on Stanford's Reid because they had to get more talented and faster at safety. Veterans Corey Moore and Kurtis Drummond, both former undrafted free agents, are backup safeties. Moore has some starting experience. He and Drummond are physical players who are better against the run than in coverage.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Brad Seely, the third special-teams coach in O'Brien's five seasons, is working 24/7 to try to rectify

IMPACT NEWCOMER

After playing more snaps than any player in the league last season and getting released by Arizona, safety **Tyrann Mathieu** signed a one-year contract. If he stays healthy, he's expected to make big plays around the line of scrimmage and give the defense some leadership on and off the field.

their wretched coverage and return teams. No discipline, too many penalties, getting caught out of position, bad tackling and pathetic blocking were all problems in 2017. The Texans needed to upgrade the talent level here and started with Johnson Bademosi, a cornerback from New England who signed as a free agent. Wideout Fuller is a dynamic punt returner, but Houston prefers for someone else to play that role. The kicking game isn't an issue. At 42, punter Shane Lechler is still one of the league's best. In his 18th season, he had a 49-yard gross average, a 41.3 net with 32 punts inside the 20 and only five touchbacks. In his first season as Houston's kicker, Ka'imi Fairbairn consistently kicked off into the end zone. He missed five field goals and three extra points, however. Jon Weeks is an outstanding snapper who hasn't misfired in his eight seasons.

BOTTOM LINE

The Texans lost nine of their last 10 games and finished with a six-game losing streak last year. Playing mostly retreads because of injuries, they were so bad they got swept by Indianapolis. If they can stay healthy and get production from free agents, they have enough talent to win the AFC South title. They don't want to start 0-2 with road losses to New England and Tennessee. They're not Super Bowl material, but as Watson showed last season, the Texans are capable of beating anybody anywhere as long as he's on the field.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B-
2018 STOCKWATCH: OUTPERFORM

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Texans had a quarterback lead the league in passing was 2009 when sixth-year pro **Matt Schaub** completed 67.9 percent of his throws for 4,770 yards and 29 touchdowns. Schaub went on to eclipse 4,000 passing yards two more times for Houston in 2010 and 2012, leading the Texans to a 12-4 mark and the AFC South title in '12.

⬎ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **S** Tyrann Mathieu
(free agent, Arizona)
- **OG** Zach Fulton
(free agent, Kansas City)
- **OG** Senio Kelemete
(free agent, New Orleans)
- **OT** Seantrel Henderson
(free agent, Buffalo)
- **QB** Brandon Weeden
(free agent, Tennessee)
- **CB** Aaron Colvin
(free agent, Jacksonville)

Seantrel Henderson

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Texans had no picks in the first two rounds but eight overall, including three in the third and sixth rounds. The three biggest needs were offensive tackle, tight end and safety. Free safety **Justin Reid** could start as a rookie next to Tyrann Mathieu. Offensive tackle Martinas Rankin should compete for a starting job on the right side of the line. Tight end Jordan Akins is more of an H-back who has good hands and speed but can't block. Keke Coutee should compete for playing time at slot receiver with Bruce Ellington and give Houston an exciting kickoff returner who can affect field position.

2018 DRAFT GRADE

B-

⬎ THE TEXANS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
3	68	Justin Reid	S	6-0	207	21	Stanford
3	80	Martinas Rankin	T	6-4	308	23	Mississippi State
3	98	Jordan Akins	TE	6-3	237	26	UCF
4	103	Keke Coutee	WR	5-10	180	21	Texas Tech
6	177	Duke Ejiofor	LB	6-3	265	23	Wake Forest
6	211	Jordan Thomas	TE	6-6	265	22	Mississippi State
6	214	Peter Kalambayi	LB	6-2	250	23	Stanford
7	222	Jermaine Kelly	CB	6-1	195	23	San Jose State

⬎ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Bill O'Brien, **Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator**; Romeo Crennel, **Defensive Coordinator**; Brad Seely, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4 Watson, Deshaun	QB	6-2	221	22	2	Clemson
5 Webb III, Joe	QB	6-4	230	31	9	UAB
3 Weeden, Brandon	QB	6-4	230	34	7	Oklahoma State

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
79 Allen, Jeff	G	6-4	306	28	7	Illinois
70 Davenport, Julién	T	6-7	318	23	2	Bucknell
61 Fuller, Kyle	C/G	6-5	307	24	2	Baylor
73 Fulton, Zach	G	6-5	315	26	5	Tennessee
76 Henderson, Seantrel	T	6-7	330	26	5	Miami (Fla.)
64 Kelemete, Senio	G	6-3	300	28	6	Washington
63 Lamm, Kendall	T	6-6	310	26	4	Appalachian State
65 Mancz, Greg	C	6-4	310	26	4	Toledo
66 Martin, Nick	C	6-4	300	25	3	Notre Dame
77 Quessenberry, David	T/G	6-5	306	28	3	San Jose State
73 Rodgers, Jake	T	6-6	320	27	1	Eastern Washington
62 Slade, Chad	G	6-5	315	26	2	Auburn

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
34 Ervin, Tyler	RB	5-10	185	24	3	San Jose State
27 Foreman, D'Onta	RB	6-1	233	22	2	Texas
26 Miller, Lamar	RB	5-10	220	27	7	Miami (Fla.)
33 Pope, Troymaine	RB	5-8	205	24	2	Jacksonville State
45 Prosch, Jay	FB	6-1	255	26	5	Auburn

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
89 Anderson, Stephen	TE	6-2	230	25	3	California
18 Coates, Sammie	WR	6-1	210	25	4	Auburn
86 Conque, Zach	TE	6-6	240	24	1	Stephen F. Austin
19 Crockett, Montay	WR	6-0	185	24	1	Georgia Southern
12 Ellington, Bruce	WR	5-9	200	27	5	South Carolina
15 Fuller V, Will	WR	6-0	180	24	3	Notre Dame
16 Gray, Deante	WR	5-10	175	24	1	TCU
84 Griffin, Ryan	TE	6-6	265	28	6	Connecticut
10 Hopkins, DeAndre	WR	6-1	215	26	6	Clemson
Lengel, Matt	TE	6-7	265	27	3	Eastern Kentucky
88 Malleck, Ryan	TE	6-4	250	25	1	Virginia Tech
13 Miller, Braxton	WR	6-1	205	25	3	Ohio State
85 Pruitt, MyCole	TE	6-2	260	26	2	Southern Illinois
81 Robinson, Jevoni	TE	6-7	240	25	1	N.C. State
14 Thompson, Chris	WR	6-0	175	24	2	Florida
11 White, DeAndrew	WR	6-0	195	26	2	Alabama

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
97 Blackson, Angelo	DE	6-4	320	25	4	Auburn
95 Covington, Christian	DE	6-2	305	24	4	Rice
92 Dunn, Brandon	DE	6-2	310	26	3	Louisville
69 Godin, Matthew	DE	6-6	295	24	2	Michigan
67 Hardison, Marcus	DT	6-3	310	26	3	Arizona State
93 Heath, Joel	DE	6-6	300	25	3	Michigan State
68 Kilgo, Darius	DT	6-3	320	26	3	Maryland
98 Reader, D.J.	DT	6-3	335	24	3	Clemson
91 Watkins, Carlos	DE	6-3	309	24	2	Clemson
99 Watt, J.J.	DE	6-5	295	29	8	Wisconsin

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
90 Clowney, Jadeveon	LB/DE	6-5	270	25	5	South Carolina
51 Cole, Dylan	LB	6-0	220	24	2	Missouri State
41 Cunningham, Zach	LB	6-3	234	23	2	Vanderbilt
47 Gilchrist, Kennan	LB	6-1	230	23	1	Appalachian State
94 Kamalu, Ufomba	LB/DE	6-6	295	25	3	Miami (Fla.)
49 Keyes, Josh	LB	6-2	230	25	4	Boston College
54 Lewis, LaTroy	LB	6-3	255	24	1	Tennessee
55 McKinney, Benardrick	LB	6-4	260	25	4	Mississippi State
59 Mercilus, Whitney	LB	6-4	265	28	7	Illinois
52 Peters, Brian	LB	6-4	240	29	4	Northwestern
53 President, Gimel	LB	6-4	275	25	1	Illinois
57 Scarlett, Brennan	LB	6-4	260	25	3	Stanford

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
20 Bademosi, Johnson	CB	6-0	205	28	7	Stanford
39 Campbell, Ibraheim	S	5-11	210	26	4	Northwestern
22 Colvin, Aaron	DB	6-0	193	26	5	Oklahoma
31 Decoud, Treston	DB	6-2	206	25	2	Oregon State
23 Drummond, Kurtis	S	6-1	200	26	4	Michigan State
29 Hal, Andre	S	5-10	195	26	5	Vanderbilt
25 Jackson, Kareem	CB	5-10	185	39	9	Alabama
30 Johnson, Kevin	CB	6-0	185	26	4	Wake Forest
37 Jones, Bryce	CB	6-0	180	24	1	Akron
24 Joseph, Johnathan	CB	5-11	185	34	13	South Carolina
32 Mathieu, Tyrann	S	5-9	185	26	6	LSU
43 Moore, Corey	S	6-2	200	25	3	Georgia
36 Thornton, Josh	CB	5-11	185	25	1	Southern Utah
32 Virgin, Dee	CB	5-10	205	24	1	West Alabama

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
7 Fairbairn, Ka'imi	K	6-0	190	24	3	UCLA
9 Lechler, Shane	P	6-2	230	42	19	Texas A&M
46 Weeks, Jon	LS	5-10	250	32	9	Baylor

INDIANAPOLIS
COLTS

T.Y. Hilton, WR

HILTON: DARRON CUMMINGS / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Cincinnati	@ Washington	@ Philadelphia	Houston	@ New England	@ N.Y. Jets	Buffalo	@ Oakland
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 4 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 4:05 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 4-12 **HOME:** 3-5
CONFERENCE: 3-9 **DIVISION:** 2-4

HEAD COACH **FRANK REICH** (FIRST YEAR)
CAREER RECORD: 0-0

▶ **ONLINE:** www.colts.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @Colts
▶ **TICKETS:** 317-299-4946
▶ **STADIUM:** Lucas Oil Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 70,000
▶ **TURF:** FieldTurf

Colts are going to need plenty of Luck just to make a reasonable run at .500

4 PREDICTED FINISH **AFC SOUTH**

BY MIKE CHAPPELL
Street & Smith's correspondent

The word is out: The Indianapolis Colts, one-time bullies of the AFC South, are in full-blown rebuild mode.

Says who? Says the boss.

"We really feel within a three-year window we have the opportunity to build this franchise, to fix some of the areas that need to be fixed," owner Jim Irsay says.

The Colts have missed the playoffs and failed to post a winning record in three straight years for the first time in nearly a quarter-century.

They're being led by a first-time NFL head coach (Frank Reich), first-time offensive coordinator (Nick Sirianni) and first-time defensive coordinator (Matt Eberflus). Second-year general manager Chris Ballard continues to take a chainsaw to a flawed roster.

And despite franchise-wide optimism, there's no guarantee quarterback Andrew Luck will return to the playing field after missing last season with his right shoulder issues.

Yet Reich is conceding nothing.

"Other guys are being paid to see the rebuilding and have the patience," he says. "There's not one ounce of me that's being patient. There's not one ounce of me

that thinks we are in a rebuilding project.

"Every ounce of me feels like we are winning this year . . . with a few breaks, staying healthy, a few more players and we can get it done. We're not playing just to improve. We're playing for championships."

OFFENSE

The buzzwords are versatility, aggression and accountability. The plan is for Reich's offense to dictate tempo and style rather than taking what defenses allow. Look for multiple formations to maximize personnel and a variation to the speed of the game. This will be the team's approach whether Luck or backup Jacoby Brissett is under center. It's the foundation of everything Reich believes in.

QUARTERBACKS: Every indication points to Luck returning to the field after missing last season with his right shoulder issues. The team's $140 million man spent the offseason immersed in his second rehab from January 2017 surgery to repair a torn labrum. Luck did very little on-field work during the offseason that involved throwing but was optimistic he would be ready for training camp with no restrictions.

Obviously, Luck's availability is the key to the season. However, there will be serious rust to knock off when he returns. The last time he was on the field was Jan. 1, 2017, against Jacksonville. Luck gives

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Andrew Luck
	Jacoby Brissett
RB	Marlon Mack
	Robert Turbin
LT	Anthony Castonzo
	Denzelle Good
LG	Quenton Nelson
	Jack Mewhort
C	Ryan Kelly
	Deyshawn Bond
RG	Braden Smith
	Matt Slauson
RT	Joe Haeg
	Le'Raven Clark
TE	Jack Doyle
	Jason Vander Laan
TE	Eric Ebron
	Erik Swoope
WR	T.Y. Hilton
	Chester Rogers
WR	Ryan Grant
	Chester Rogers

DEFENSE

DE	Jabaal Sheard
	Tarell Basham
DT	Al Woods
	Grover Stewart
DT	Hassan Ridgeway
	Tyquan Lewis
DE	John Simon
	Denico Autry
OLB	Darius Leonard
	Anthony Walker
MLB	Najee Goode
	Matthew Adams
OLB	Antonio Morrison
	Zaire Franklin
CB	Quincy Wilson
	Kenny Moore II
CB	Pierre Desir
	Nate Hairston
SS	Clayton Geathers
	Matthias Farley
FS	Malik Hooker
	T.J. Green

SPECIALISTS

LS	Luke Rhodes
P	Rigoberto Sanchez
K	Adam Vinatieri
KR	Nyheim Hines
PR	Chester Rogers

BYE: WEEK 9 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Game may be flexed to Saturday, Dec. 22.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Jacksonville	Tennessee	Miami	@ Jacksonville	@ Houston	Dallas	N.Y. Giants	@ Tennessee
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23* / TBD*	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

INDIANAPOLIS **COLTS**

Andrew Luck, QB

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
42-38

PL	PL			
11-5	11-5	8-8	8-8	4-12
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
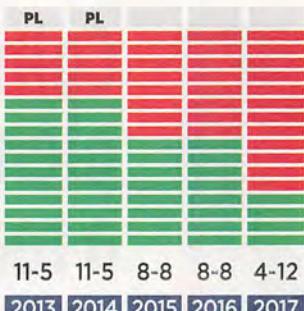
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

the team a chance every game with his playmaking ability, especially late in games. A big reason the Colts finished 4-12 a year ago was their inability to finish games. They held the halftime lead nine times, but were just 2-7 in those games behind backup Brissett. With Luck under center, the team is 34-4 when it has had a halftime lead.

Brissett kept the Colts competitive last season and showed growth throughout. With a full season under his belt, he represents one of the league's more competent backups. He possesses a strong arm and enough mobility to evade the first wave of pressure in the pocket.

RUNNING BACKS: It figures to be a running backs-by-committee approach following the expected and necessary departure of Frank Gore. However, someone must be the quasi-feature back, and that likely is Marlon Mack. The 2017 fourth-round pick flashed brilliance as a rookie with six rushes of at least 20 yards while working as the change-up to Gore's move-the-chains style. But Mack also had trouble with his consistency and too often was stopped behind the line of scrimmage or for no gain. He will remain an excellent threat to bounce plays outside but needs to become more effective between the tackles.

Robert Turbin should continue in his role as one of the league's premier short-yardage and goal-line threats. Over the past two seasons he's an NFL-best 12-of-12 on converting third-and-one situations. Turbin also has nine total touchdowns over the last two seasons. He wants a larger role, but that might not happen.

Rookie speedsters Nyheim Hines and Jordan Wilkins are wild cards in the mix. Each brings speed and versatility to the huddle.

RECEIVERS: This remains T.Y. Hilton's realm, but the four-time Pro Bowler needs a ton of help. His supporting cast includes only four players who have caught a pass in the regular season: free agent Ryan Grant (84 career receptions), Chester Rogers (42), James Wright (18) and DeAndre Smelter (1).

Hilton remains one of the league's premier deep threats and game-breaking talents. Of his 467 receptions, including the playoffs, 32 have gained at least 40 yards. Of his 36 touchdowns, 14 have covered at least 40 yards.

His singular talents aside, Hilton needs help. Too often physical corners have neutralized his contributions.

Rogers has flashed potential, but injuries impeded his progress last season. Grant needs to step into the No. 2 slot, but his best season was '17 with Washington when he posted 45 receptions, 573 yards

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Colts

"Having **Chris (Ballard)** and Frank (Reich) there, they have a lot of positive things going for them right now. They'll work well together. They're both high-level people. With Frank as head coach, it's like it's back in the family again. I think it's awesome. Frank can inspire people. He's a born leader. It's not a coincidence he led the two biggest comebacks in the NFL and NCAA history. ... Personnel-wise, they've got a long way to go. On defense, going from a 3-4 to a 4-3, that right away is going to take time just switching the personnel over. They know that. Offensively, it's a little thin. ... (Andrew Luck might not throw until camp.) That's concerning, but they must have enough information inside to be completely confident. He must be good to go."

⬇ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	9-46	Los Angeles Rams
09/17	L	13-16	Arizona Cardinals
09/24	W	31-28	Cleveland Browns
10/01	L	18-46	Seattle Seahawks
10/08	W	26-23	San Francisco 49ers
10/16	L	22-36	Tennessee Titans
10/22	L	0-27	Jacksonville Jaguars
10/29	L	23-24	Cincinnati Bengals
11/05	W	20-14	Houston Texans
11/12	L	17-20	Pittsburgh Steelers
11/26	L	16-20	Tennessee Titans
12/03	L	10-30	Jacksonville Jaguars
12/10	L	7-13	Buffalo Bills
12/14	L	13-25	Denver Broncos
12/23	L	16-23	Baltimore Ravens
12/31	W	22-13	Houston Texans

2017 RECORD: 4-12

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Gore	261	961	3.7	21	3
Mack	93	358	3.8	35	3
Brissett	63	260	4.1	25	4
Turbin	23	53	2.3	7	1
Jones	5	14	2.8	5	0
Rogers	3	8	2.7	7	0
Tolzien	2	2	1.0	3	0
Ferguson	1	5	5.0	5	0
INDIANAPOLIS	451	1,661	3.7	35	11
OPPONENTS	488	1,927	3.9	72t	15

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Doyle	80	690	8.6	26	4
Hilton	57	966	16.9	80t	4
Gore	29	245	8.4	26	1
Moncrief	26	391	15.0	60t	2
Rogers	23	284	12.3	61t	1
Mack	21	225	10.7	34	1
Aiken	15	133	8.9	21	0
Williams	13	121	9.3	32	0
Turbin	9	56	6.2	16	0
Bray	3	39	13.0	22	0
Daniels	3	26	8.7	13	0
Ferguson	3	16	5.3	8	0
Travis	2	33	16.5	20	0
Hazel	1	1	1.0	1	0
INDIANAPOLIS	285	3,226	11.3	80t	13
OPPONENTS	320	4,123	12.9	67	23

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Brissett	469	276	3,098	13	7
Tolzien	18	9	128	0	2
INDIANAPOLIS	487	285	2,892	13	9
OPPONENTS	513	320	3,946	23	13

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Bray	18	430	23.9	60	0
Ferguson	5	86	17.2	20	0
Mack	3	69	23.0	34	0
Rogers	1	5	5.0	5	0
Basham	1	0	0.0	0	0
INDIANAPOLIS	28	590	21.1	60	0
OPPONENTS	23	441	19.2	40	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Bray	17	90	5.3	20	0
Rogers	10	80	8.0	30	0
INDIANAPOLIS	27	162	6.0	30	0
OPPONENTS	19	80	4.2	29	0

SACKS   INDIANAPOLIS 25.0, OPPONENTS 56.0

Sheard 5.5, Ridgeway 3.0, Simon 3.0, Anderson 2.0, Basham 2.0, Hairston 2.0, Hankins 2.0, Mingo 2.0, Bostic 1.0, Hunt 1.0, Woods 1.0, George 0.5

⬇ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	284.6	31
Rushing	103.8	22
Passing	180.8	30
Scoring	16.4	30
Punt returns	6.0	28
Kick returns	21.1	18
Red zone TD%	40.0	31
Total defense	367.1	30
Against rush	120.4	26
Against pass	246.6	28
Points allowed	25.2	30
Interceptions	13	15t
Sacks	25.0	31
Turnover diff.	+5	12

and four TDs.

Look for tight ends Jack Doyle and free agent Eric Ebron to complement the wideouts. Doyle is coming off his first Pro Bowl and his 80 receptions were second most in team history. He's established himself as a security blanket for QBs. Ebron is looking for a fresh start after never fulfilling expectations during his four-year stint with Detroit. Ebron is a matchup problem for defenses and will be given every opportunity to excel in Reich's offense.

OFFENSIVE LINE: Prepare yourself for more shuffling. The only certainty moving forward is Anthony Castonzo returns at left tackle, Ryan Kelly at center and first-round draft pick Quenton Nelson steps in immediately at left guard.

Training camp competition will determine the rest, including whether second-rounder Braden Smith jumps to the top of the pecking order at right guard. Smith joins the mix at a spot that already includes oft-injured Jack Mewhort and free-agent acquisition Matt Slauson. Joe Haeg, who's without question the unit's most versatile component, and Denzelle Good likely will battle for the starting spot at right tackle.

Experience comes from guard Jeremy Vujnovich, who started all 16 games at left guard and didn't miss a snap last year, and Le'Raven Clark. One of the keys to returning as a playoff contender is for the Colts to finally fix an offensive line that contributed to the team allowing a league-high 56.0 sacks. That task falls at the feet of new line coach Dave DeGuglielmo and assistant Bobby Johnson.

Finally achieving some level of continuity would be a good first step. Since Luck's arrival in 2012, the Colts have used 46 different starting combinations.

DEFENSE

The arrival of first-time coordinator Eberflus heralds a seismic shift. Gone is Chuck Pagano's 3-4 scheme that never took root. Now, the Colts shift to a 4-3 that will be based on speed, athleticism and aggressiveness. Eberflus worked under longtime NFL defensive master Rod Marinelli, so look for the new defense to utilize many of the concepts Marinelli picked up during his years in Tampa Bay with Tony Dungy.

DEFENSIVE LINE: No area is better stocked with experienced bodies. Jabaal Sheard and John Simon, outside linebackers in last season's 3-4, move to the end spots in Eberflus' 4-3. Sheard was one of Ballard's better free-agent

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Indianapolis head coach Frank Reich

During an NFL career that stretches back to 1985, Reich has rubbed shoulders and gleaned info from at least seven Hall-of-Famers: Marv Levy, Jim Kelly, Thurman Thomas, Bill Polian, Tony Dungy, Peyton Manning and Marvin Harrison. He picked the brains of offensive savants Ted Marchibroda, Tom Moore and Howard Mudd. He relates to players. He will play to their strengths and try to minimize their weaknesses. He's a quiet but firm motivator.

REICH: MICHAEL CONROY / AP

INDIANAPOLIS **COLTS**

acquisitions in '17. He was solid setting the edge against the run and found time to lead the team with 5.5 sacks. Simon was headed for the best season of his career–3.0 sacks, one interception, 43 tackles–before a shoulder injury forced him to miss the final four games.

Tarell Basham, a 2017 third-round pick, is expected to emerge as a viable pass-rush threat in Year Two. He's more comfortable playing with his hand on the ground than in a two-point stance.

The intriguing depth up front includes draft picks Kemoko Turay and Tyquan Lewis, plus tackles Hassan Ridgeway, Al Woods and Grover Steward and end Denico Autry. Autry appeared in 56 games with Oakland and collected 10.5 sacks, 12 passes defensed and two fumble recoveries.

LINEBACKERS: No position carries more question marks, and most are accentuated by the transition to the 4-3 that moved Sheard, Simon and Basham to end. Antonio Morrison led the defense with 109 tackles a year ago, but he lacks sideline-to-sideline speed and is a liability in coverage. Anthony Walker, a 2017 fifth-round pick, appeared in 10 games with two starts during a lackluster rookie year.

One of Ballard's selective free-agent acquisitions was Najee Goode, but he was signed to a one-year contract at the veteran's minimum. Goode, 29, started three of 16 games for the Philadelphia Eagles, but his value was more on special teams than with the defense.

Second-round draft pick Darius Leonard could see extensive playing time as a rookie, almost by default.

SECONDARY: Youth will be served. The "old man" in the cornerback room is Pierre Desir, 28. Projected starter Quincy Wilson, 22, and nickel Nate Hairston are 2017 draft picks and Kenny Moore II also was a rookie last season. Free-agent pickup Kenneth Acker brings 40 games and 15 starts to the corner mix, but he's just 26. Hairston excelled as a rookie working out of the slot, but the team needs Wilson to take a major leap in his second year. Lackluster practice habits impeded his development last season.

It's more of the same with the safety group: Malik Hooker, Clayton Geathers, Matthias Farley and T.J. Green are 26 or younger. The key to the effectiveness of the unit is how quickly Hooker regains his form and whether Green ever fulfills his potential. Hooker, the 2017 first-round pick, missed the final half of his rookie season with a knee injury and Green has never displayed the discipline or consistency management envisioned when it selected him in the second round of the 2016 draft.

New head coach Frank Reich wants no-nonsense players who fit the culture the team is seeking to develop. Guard Quenton Nelson checks all the boxes. He will start immediately and brings a relentless, nasty attitude to the lineup. Evidence of the team's faith in Nelson? He's the first guard it has taken in the first round since Ron Solt in 1984.

SPECIAL TEAMS: This is an area that remains in the capable hands of the old and relatively new. The "old" is placekicker Adam Vinatieri. He's entering his 23rd season and is the NFL's oldest player at 45. The "relatively new" are punter Rigoberto Sanchez, 24 and heading into his second year, and Luke Rhodes, 25 and in his second season as a long snapper.

Vinatieri shows no signs of slowing down. Over the past five seasons, he's converted 146 of 163 field goals (89.6 percent), including 23-of-29 (79.3 percent) on attempts of at least 50 yards. In 2017, he knocked down 29 of 34 attempts, and his five misses included 33- and 43-yarders in a Buffalo snowstorm. He also had a 38-yarder blocked and was short on a 60-yard attempt.

Sanchez stepped in when Pro Bowl punter Pat McAfee retired and posted a solid rookie season: 44.8-yard gross and 42.6 net averages. He had 28 punts downed inside the 20-yard line while giving up just three touchbacks.

The return duties are up in the air. Wideout Rogers brings experience on punt returns, but rookie Hines is expected to offer serious competition.

BOTTOM LINE

With Luck (no pun intended), the Colts should regain their relevancy in the AFC. Without him, they'll finish with a fourth consecutive non-winning season since a nine-year stretch that spanned two cities (1978-86). All signs point toward Luck being ready for the start of the season, but there will be rust to knock off. Even so, a Luck-led team is capable of pushing to 8-8.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C-
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...
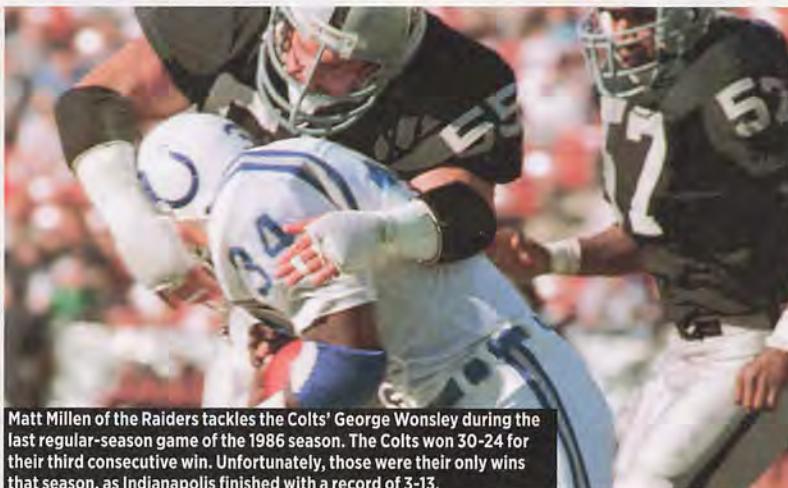
Matt Millen of the Raiders tackles the Colts' George Wonsley during the last regular-season game of the 1986 season. The Colts won 30-24 for their third consecutive win. Unfortunately, those were their only wins that season, as Indianapolis finished with a record of 3-13.

... the Colts went a full decade between playoff trips was 1977-87 when they missed the postseason nine times from 1978-86 under six different coaches. During that stretch, they were 38-98-1, never finishing above fourth place and hitting the division cellar on four occasions. The futility peaked in 1982 when the team was winless (0-8-1) during a strike-shortened season under first-year coach Frank Kush.

AFC SOUTH

↘ NEW ARRIVALS

- **C/G** Matt Slauson
  (free agent, L.A. Chargers)
- **WR** Ryan Grant
  (free agent, Washington)
- **TE** Eric Ebron
  (free agent, Detroit)
- **DE** Denico Autry
  (free agent, Oakland)
- **LB** Najee Goode
  (free agent, Philadelphia)
- **CB** Kenneth Acker
  (free agent, Kansas City)

NFL DRAFT

Eric Ebron

THE DRAFT REPORT

The draft class lacked pizzazz, but that never was the aim. General manager Chris Ballard and head coach Frank Reich were committed to laying a solid foundation based on a strong offensive line and defensive front. That resulted in adding Quenton Nelson and **Braden Smith**, who were *Associated Press* first-team All-America guards, and defensive ends Kemoko Turay and Tyquan Lewis with four of the top five picks, all within the top 64. The second player taken, outside linebacker Darius Leonard, represents an immediate upgrade at the second level of the defense. Indy used first- and second-round picks on offensive linemen for the first time in the common-draft era, and Nelson and Smith figure to be interior mainstays for the foreseeable future.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
B

↘ THE COLTS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	6	Quenton Nelson	G	6-5	330	22	Notre Dame
2	36	Darius Leonard	LB	6-3	235	23	South Carolina State
2	37	Braden Smith	G	6-6	303	22	Auburn
2	52	Kemoko Turay	DE/LB	6-6	220	23	Rutgers
2	64	Tyquan Lewis	DE	6-3	266	23	Ohio State
4	104	Nyheim Hines	RB	5-9	197	22	N.C. State
5	159	Daurice Fountain	WR	6-1	210	22	Northern Iowa
5	169	Jordan Wilkins	RB	6-1	217	24	Ole Miss
6	185	Deon Cain	WR	6-1	210	22	Clemson
7	221	Matthew Adams	LB	6-1	237	22	Houston
7	235	Zaire Franklin	LB	6-0	238	22	Syracuse

↘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF

COACHES: Frank Reich, **Head Coach**; Nick Sirianni, **Offensive Coordinator**; Matt Eberflus, **Defensive Coordinator**; Bubba Ventrone, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
7	Brissett, Jacoby	QB	6-4	235	24	3	N.C. State
9	Kaaya, Brad	QB	6-4	215	23	1	Miami (Fla.)
12	Luck, Andrew	QB	6-4	240	28	7	Stanford
5	Walker, Phillip	QB	5-11	216	23	1	Temple

OFFENSIVE LINE
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
69	Bond, Deyshawn	G	6-1	299	24	2	Cincinnati
65	Burwell, Tyreek	T	6-6	310	26	4	Cincinnati
74	Castonzo, Anthony	T	6-7	311	30	8	Boston College
62	Clark, Le'Raven	T	6-5	311	25	3	Texas Tech
61	Fabiano, Anthony	C	6-4	303	25	1	Harvard
64	Glowinski, Mark	G	6-4	310	26	4	West Virginia
71	Good, Denzelle	T/G	6-5	345	27	4	Mars Hill
73	Haeg, Joe	T/G	6-6	305	25	3	North Dakota State
78	Kelly, Ryan	C	6-4	309	25	3	Alabama
75	Mewhort, Jack	T/G	6-6	305	26	5	Ohio State
68	Slauson, Matt	C/G	6-5	315	32	10	Nebraska
67	Vujnovich, Jeremy	G	6-5	300	27	2	Louisiana College
63	Williams, Isaiah	G	6-3	306	25	1	Akron

RUNNING BACKS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
39	Ferguson, Josh	RB	5-10	205	25	3	Illinois
34	Jones, Matt	RB	6-2	239	25	4	Florida
25	Mack, Marlon	RB	6-0	210	22	2	South Florida
38	Michael, Christine	RB	5-10	220	27	6	Texas A&M
33	Turbin, Robert	RB	5-10	216	28	7	Utah State

RECEIVERS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
48	Alie-Cox, Mo	TE	6-6	267	24	1	VCU
83	Anderson, Dres	WR	6-2	190	26	1	Utah
15	Brent, K.J.	WR	6-3	202	25	1	Wake Forest
47	Daniels, Darrell	TE	6-3	246	23	2	Washington
84	Doyle, Jack	TE	6-6	262	28	6	Western Kentucky
85	Ebron, Eric	TE	6-4	253	25	5	North Carolina
11	Grant, Ryan	WR	6-0	204	27	5	Tulane
13	Hilton, T.Y.	WR	5-9	178	28	7	Florida International
81	Hogan, Krishawn	WR	6-3	222	23	2	Marian (Ind.)
16	Jones, Seantavius	WR	6-3	200	26	1	Valdosta State
8	Liggins, Justice	WR	6-1	210	23	1	Stephen F. Austin
14	Listenbee, Kolby	WR	6-0	183	24	1	TCU
80	Rogers, Chester	WR	6-1	184	24	3	Grambling State
6	Smelter, DeAndre	WR	6-2	227	26	2	Georgia Tech
86	Swoope, Erik	TE	6-5	258	26	3	Miami (Fla.)
43	Travis, Ross	TE	6-7	235	25	3	Penn State
45	Vander Laan, Jason	TE	6-4	244	25	2	Ferris State
17	Wright, James	WR	6-0	203	26	4	LSU

DEFENSIVE LINE
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
95	Autry, Denico	DE	6-5	270	28	5	Mississippi State
58	Basham, Tarell	DE	6-4	266	24	2	Ohio
56	Calvin, Johnathan	DT	6-3	266	24	1	Mississippi State
92	Hunt, Margus	DE	6-8	298	31	6	SMU
97	Johnson, Anthony	DE	6-2	295	25	4	LSU
94	Mbu, Joey	DT	6-3	323	25	2	Houston
54	Reid, Caraun	DT	6-2	298	26	5	Princeton
91	Ridgeway, Hassan	DT	6-3	318	23	3	Texas
93	Sheard, Jabaal	DE	6-3	265	29	8	Pittsburgh
51	Simon, John	DE	6-1	250	27	6	Ohio State
90	Stewart, Grover	DT	6-4	333	24	2	Albany State
99	Woods, Al	DT	6-4	330	31	9	LSU

LINEBACKERS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
45	Adams, Tyrell	LB	6-2	230	26	3	West Georgia
59	George, Jeremiah	LB	5-11	234	26	4	Iowa State
52	Goode, Najee	LB	6-0	244	29	7	West Virginia
56	Grace, Jermaine	LB	6-1	223	24	2	Miami (Fla.)
55	Miley, Arthur	LB	6-6	270	25	2	Southern
44	Morrison, Antonio	LB	6-1	241	23	3	Florida
49	Perry, Josh	LB	6-4	253	24	2	Ohio State
48	Sankey, Darnell	LB	6-2	250	23	2	Sacramento State
50	Walker, Anthony	LB	6-1	242	23	2	Northwestern

DEFENSIVE BACKS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
30	Acker, Kenneth	CB	6-0	195	26	5	SMU
35	Desir, Pierre	CB	6-2	198	28	5	Lindenwood
41	Farley, Matthias	S	5-11	209	26	3	Notre Dame
26	Geathers, Clayton	S	6-2	220	26	4	UCF
32	Green, T.J.	S	6-3	211	23	3	Clemson
27	Hairston, Nate	CB	6-0	195	24	2	Temple
29	Hooker, Malik	S	6-2	212	22	2	Ohio State
40	Martin, Ronald	S	6-2	220	25	2	LSU
28	Milton, Chris	CB	5-11	196	25	3	Georgia Tech
23	Moore II, Kenny	CB	5-9	190	23	2	Valdosta State
37	White, D.J.	CB	5-11	193	25	3	Georgia Tech
31	Wilson, Quincy	CB	6-1	206	22	2	Florida

SPECIALISTS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
46	Rhodes, Luke	LS	6-2	238	25	2	William & Mary
2	Sanchez, Rigoberto	P	6-0	195	24	2	Hawaii
4	Vinatieri, Adam	K	6-0	212	45	23	South Dakota State

LOS ANGELES
CHARGERS

Melvin Gordon, RB

GORDON: JOHN CORDES / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 9
Kansas City	@ Buffalo	@ L.A. Rams	San Francisco	Oakland	@ Cleveland	Tennessee*	@ Seattle
Sept. 9 / 4:05 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 4:05 PM	Sept. 30 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 7 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 9:30 AM	Nov. 4 / 4:05 PM

2017 RECORD | **OVERALL:** 9-7 **HOME:** 5-3
CONFERENCE: 6-6 **DIVISION:** 3-3

HEAD COACH **ANTHONY LYNN** (SECOND YEAR, 9-7)
CAREER RECORD: 9-8

▶ **ONLINE:** www.chargers.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @Chargers
▶ **TICKETS:** 1-877-CHARGERS
▶ **STADIUM:** StubHub Center
▶ **CAPACITY:** 30,000
▶ **TURF:** Grass

Bolts came close to playoffs last year and have quietly become a postseason team

BY PAT YASINSKAS
Street & Smith's correspondent

Los Angeles long has been a city that's all about glitz and glamour. Superstars are all over the place.

But someone forgot to tell that to the Los Angeles Chargers. While the city's other team, the Rams, were busy bringing in more players and big names than perhaps anyone in the league, the Chargers pretty much sat still in the offseason. By design, they didn't try to structure a team built for Hollywood.

"Flashy don't win games," Chargers coach Anthony Lynn told the *Los Angeles Times*.

Lynn has a point. Throughout history, there have been plenty of teams that made a bunch of big moves and flopped. Conversely, there have been plenty of teams that carried over most of a good roster, made a few tweaks and thrived.

That's the route the Chargers are taking. They were 9-7 and just missed the playoffs last year. They also made huge strides as the season went on. They started 0-4 and then went 9-3. The Chargers are betting continuity will help them take the next step. This is Lynn's second season and the roster is filled with familiar faces and they have balance with

a good offense and a good defense.

The Chargers allowed 17.0 points per game (third in the NFL last season). On offense, they have a very dependable veteran quarterback in Philip Rivers and a cast of solid role players. The Chargers may not be flashy, but they could end up being very good.

OFFENSE

Coordinator Ken Whisenhunt ran a very balanced offense last year and has been with Rivers and the Chargers since 2016. Rivers is 36 and, if he is slowing down physically, he can compensate for it with intelligence and experience. Rivers, Melvin Gordon and Keenan Allen form a rather dynamic trio of players to stand out at the skill positions. And, despite how boring the Chargers' offseason may have looked to many, there was one move that could have major implications. Of course, it came at a position that is often considered boring: center. But the arrival of Mike Pouncey from Miami is only going to help this offense. Pouncey is already a very good player, but he has admitted that he'll be playing with a chip on his shoulder because he's not happy about the way he was unceremoniously released in Miami.

QUARTERBACKS: Rivers threw for 4,515 yards last year to go with 28 touchdowns and 10 interceptions and the Chargers gladly would take another

PREDICTED FINISH AFC WEST 1

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Philip Rivers
	Geno Smith
FB	Derek Watt
RB	Melvin Gordon
	Austin Ekeler
LT	Russell Okung
	Sam Tevi
LG	Dan Feeney
	Cole Toner
C	Mike Pouncey
	Spencer Pulley
RG	Forrest Lamp
	Cole Toner
RT	Joe Barksdale
	Brett Boyko
TE	Hunter Henry
	Virgil Green
WR	Keenan Allen
	Travis Benjamin
WR	Mike Williams
	Tyrell Williams

DEFENSE
DE	Joey Bosa
	Justin Jones
DT	Brandon Mebane
	Damion Square
DT	Corey Liuget
	Kaleb Eulls
DE	Melvin Ingram
	Darius Philon
OLB	Denzel Perryman
	Uchenna Nwosu
MLB	Hayes Pullard
	Nick Dzubnar
OLB	Kyle Emanuel
	James Onwualu
CB	Casey Hayward
	Desmond King
CB	Trevor Williams
	Desmond King
SS	Jahleel Addae
	Adrian Phillips
FS	Derwin James
	Jaylen Watkins

SPECIALISTS
LS	Mike Windt
P	Drew Kaser
K	Caleb Sturgis
KR	Desmond King
PR	Travis Benjamin

BYE: WEEK 8 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *London **Game may be flexed to Saturday, Dec. 22.

Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17
@ Oakland	Denver	Arizona	@ Pittsburgh	Cincinnati	@ Kansas City	Baltimore	@ Denver
Nov. 11 / 4:05 PM	Nov. 18 / 4:05 PM	Nov. 25 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 13 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 23** / TBD**	Dec. 30 / 4:25 PM

LOS ANGELES **CHARGERS**

Joey Bosa, DE

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
36-44

9-7	9-7	4-12	5-11	9-7
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

season like that. But they would like to see a slight increase in Rivers' completion percentage (62.6). Rivers is a natural leader and says he wants to play a few more years, but the Chargers have to start grooming a replacement because backup Geno Smith is not the long-term answer.

RUNNING BACKS: Gordon was a very effective workhorse last year, carrying 284 times for 1,105 yards and eight touchdowns. Gordon still is young and can handle a similar load. The offensive line was already solid, but the arrival of Pouncey brings one more strong blocker for Gordon. That could erase the only thing that's close to a knock on Gordon. He averaged 3.9 yards per carry last year and has averaged 3.8 for his career. What most don't realize is that

Gordon put up those kinds of numbers while dealing with a knee injury much of the season.

Austin Ekeler has promise as a third-down back, but he's not capable of filling a big role if Gordon misses substantial time.

RECEIVERS: Allen looked like he was going to be a stud when the Chargers first drafted him back in 2013 and he had 1,046 receiving yards as a rookie. But injuries slowed Allen and kept him quiet the next three seasons. But everything changed last year. Allen had a breakout campaign, catching 102 passes for 1,393 yards and six touchdowns. He looked like a true No. 1 wide receiver. That's part of why the Chargers are so excited about the position this year. They think they have

two guys capable of being a No. 1 receiver.

The other is second-year pro Mike Williams, whose performance as a rookie was limited by injuries. Tyrell Williams and Travis Benjamin are solid as backup wideouts and could step in if Allen or Williams have any more ailments.

The real question mark is at tight end, where Antonio Gates, one of the best and most popular players in franchise history, was not re-signed. Hunter Henry, the heir apparent, is a long drop-off from Gates.

OFFENSIVE LINE: This already was an outstanding unit when you consider the Chargers allowed a league-low 18.0 sacks last season and Gordon was so productive. But add Pouncey to the mix and the Chargers suddenly have a chance to be the best, or one of the best,

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Chargers

"I think a lot of people are underrating this team because it doesn't seem to be filled with superstars. But in reality, it truly does have its share of stars. **(Philip) Rivers** is a franchise quarterback and that alone makes them dangerous. But they also have guys like (Melvin) Gordon, (Keenan) Allen, (Joey) Bosa, (Melvin) Ingram and (Casey) Hayward. That's six players who are among the best in the league at their positions. In my eyes, if you have six guys like that, you should be able to contend. ... I like Gordon a lot. He is very tough and he has shown a willingness

to play through pain. He played through pain last year and he still produced. I would like to see what he can do if he can stay healthy for a full season. ... They absolutely have to get the kicker thing figured out. I mean, you can't go through four kickers in one season. Those kickers were costing them games. It's not supposed to work that way. Kickers are supposed to win games for you. If the offense has another good year, I think you'll see (Ken) Whisenhunt get another shot at being a head coach. ... I'm really curious to see what (Mike) Williams can do at wide receiver. I really liked him coming out in the draft last year. If he's healthy, he's going to give them a lot of big plays."

⬊ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/11	L	21-24	Denver Broncos
09/17	L	17-19	Miami Dolphins
09/24	L	10-24	Kansas City Chiefs
10/01	L	24-26	Philadelphia Eagles
10/08	W	27-22	New York Giants
10/15	W	17-16	Oakland Raiders
10/22	W	21-0	Denver Broncos
10/29	L	13-21	New England Patriots
11/12	L	17-20	Jacksonville Jaguars
11/19	W	54-24	Buffalo Bills
11/23	W	28-6	Dallas Cowboys
12/03	W	19-10	Cleveland Browns
12/10	W	30-13	Washington Redskins
12/16	L	13-30	Kansas City Chiefs
12/24	W	14-7	New York Jets
12/31	W	30-10	Oakland Raiders

2017 RECORD: 9-7

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Gordon	284	1,105	3.9	87t	8
Ekeler	47	260	5.5	35t	2
Oliver	35	83	2.4	26	0
Rivers	18	-2	-0.1	8	0
Benjamin	13	96	7.4	22	0
A. Williams	9	25	2.8	7	0
Watt	6	24	4.0	17	0
Clemens	5	-5	-1.0	-1	0
Allen	2	9	4.5	6	0
LOS ANGELES	419	1,595	3.8	87t	10
OPPONENTS	430	2,098	4.9	69t	11

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Allen	102	1,393	13.7	51	6
Gordon	58	476	8.2	49	4
Henry	45	579	12.9	54	4
T. Williams	43	728	16.9	75t	4
Benjamin	34	567	16.7	62t	4
Gates	30	316	10.5	27	3
Ekeler	27	279	10.3	38	3
M. Williams	11	95	8.6	20	0
Oliver	6	26	4.3	11	0
McGrath	4	46	11.5	23	0
Watt	2	35	17.5	23	0
Inman	2	9	4.5	7	0
Cumberland	2	2	1.0	2	0
LOS ANGELES	366	4,551	12.4	75t	28
OPPONENTS	329	3,417	10.4	87t	17

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Rivers	575	360	4,515	28	10
Clemens	8	6	36	0	1
LOS ANGELES	583	366	4,431	28	11
OPPONENTS	524	329	3,156	17	18

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
King	17	353	20.8	44	0
Ekeler	5	85	17.0	22	0
Davis	2	36	18.0	19	0
Palepoi	1	0	0.0	0	0
LOS ANGELES	25	474	19.0	44	0
OPPONENTS	46	1,150	25.0	71	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Benjamin	27	257	9.5	65t	1
King	1	2	2.0	2	0
LOS ANGELES	28	259	9.3	65t	1
OPPONENTS	48	319	6.6	31	0

SACKS	LOS ANGELES 43.0, OPPONENTS 18.0

Bosa 12.5, Ingram 10.5, McCain 5.0, Philon 4.5, King 4.0, Emanuel 1.5, Liuget 1.5, Palepoi 1.0, Rochell 1.0, Toomer 1.0, Addae 0.5

⬊ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	376.6	4
Rushing	99.7	24
Passing	276.9	1
Scoring	22.2	13
Punt returns	9.3	9
Kick returns	19.0	30
Red zone TD%	46.8	28
Total defense	328.4	15
Against rush	131.1	31
Against pass	197.2	3
Points allowed	17.0	3
Interceptions	18	6t
Sacks	43.0	5t
Turnover diff.	+12	3

offensive lines in the league. It might be the strongest area on the roster. Besides Pouncey, the line will be anchored by left tackle Russell Okung. The Chargers have a little more youth at guard with Dan Feeney and Forrest Lamp. Joe Barksdale is a dependable right tackle.

DEFENSE

Coordinator Gus Bradley is back after the Chargers climbed to third in the league in scoring defense last year, although major improvement is needed in one area.

Lynn and Bradley share a common belief that stopping the run is a critical part of their formula for winning. But it didn't work out that way last year. The Chargers allowed 131.1 yards per game, which was second worst in the league. That threw the defense totally out of sync, which was unfortunate because the pass defense is a very good one. The Chargers need to be at least respectable against the run this year.

The pass rush again will be the foundation of this unit with defensive ends Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram leading the way.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Bosa and Ingram form one of the league's top pass-rushing duos. Bosa had 12.5 sacks while Ingram produced 10.5. Both earned Pro Bowl berths, with Ingram filling in as an injury replacement for Bosa.

Backup Darius Philon also has the potential to be a decent pass rusher after recording 4.5 sacks last season. The Chargers can count on a similar pass rush this year because Bosa and Ingram are two guys who consistently create a lot of pressure.

The run defense is a different story. Defensive line coach Giff Smith faces a mighty task in making this unit respectable. Just how bad were things last year? Kansas City's Kareem Hunt averaged 163.5 yards a game against the Chargers and, unless there is a sudden divisional realignment, L.A. will have to play Hunt

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Los Angeles head coach Anthony Lynn

Lynn is very predictable and that's actually a good thing in the current scheme of things for the Chargers. He works well with general manager Tom Telesco because both believe you should build a team through continuity and not try to go out and buy a championship. Lynn retained almost his entire coaching staff from last year—another indication the Chargers believe they're on the verge of something big. Lynn also doesn't have a big ego and is good at delegating responsibilities to his assistants, particularly coordinators Ken Whisenhunt and Gus Bradley. That's a smart move because both are former head coaches.

LOS ANGELES **CHARGERS**

and the Chiefs twice again this year.

LINEBACKERS: The blame for the woes in the running game can't all be placed on the line. The linebackers also played a major role. But holding true to their desire for continuity, the Chargers didn't panic in the offseason. A huge part of the problem was the extended absence by inside 'backer Denzel Perryman. He tore a ligament in his ankle and missed nine games. In those nine games, the Chargers allowed 1,278 rushing yards; in the seven games Perryman played, they allowed only 820. Hayes Pullard and Kyle Emanuel are reliable starters and the Chargers believe they can do a much better job against the run if their linebackers stay healthy.

SECONDARY: Heading into the draft, the Chargers were strong at cornerback but had questions at safety. That suddenly changed when Florida State safety Derwin James was available at No. 17 overall. James will start right away. Jahleel Addae, Adrian Phillips and Jaylen Watkins will compete to be the other starting safety.

The Chargers are in great shape at cornerback. Casey Hayward has developed into one of the best cover corners in the league and that's why L.A. signed him to a three-year, $36 million extension during the offseason. There's

IMPACT NEWCOMER

Like a lot of teams around the league, the Chargers were shocked when the Dolphins cut **Mike Pouncey**. It's very rare for a top-notch player in the prime of his career to come open in that way and the Chargers jumped at the opportunity to get him. The belief is that Pouncey will bring something that an already-good offensive line was lacking. Pouncey plays with a mean streak and the Chargers are hoping that's contagious for the rest of their linemen.

not much drop-off on the other side. Although he came into the league as an undrafted free agent, Trevor Williams looks like a natural fit in Bradley's system. The Chargers also have a strong slot corner in Desmond King, who played exceptionally well as a rookie last season.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Even more than the run defense, this was a huge problem spot last year. That's because the Chargers couldn't find a kicker who could make field goals with any sort of regularity. They went through four kickers and will have a new one this year.

Lynn has set the stage for a training-camp battle between Caleb Sturgis and Roberto Aguayo, who was a former second-round pick of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Aguayo had a great college career at Florida State and is an amazing talent, but he was terribly erratic in Tampa Bay.

The rest of the special teams aren't bad. Punter Drew Kaser averaged 48.1 yards a kick last year and Benjamin and King are solid return men.

BOTTOM LINE

The Chargers barely missed the playoffs last year and if either the kicking game or run defense had been even respectable, they would have made the postseason. That's why the coaching staff and front office are optimistic heading into this season. They didn't make a lot of big moves, but that shouldn't be seen as a negative. Give this team a reliable kicker, a healthy linebacker and a run-stuffer and it could contend for big things.

2018 TEAM GRADE: **B+**
2018 STOCKWATCH: **BUY**

THE LAST TIME ...

... an NFL quarterback wore a jersey number higher than 19 was in the 1970s when longtime Charger QB **John Hadl** donned the No. 21 jersey during his 16-year NFL career, 11 seasons (1962-72) of which were spent with the Chargers. The league enacted a more stringent numbering system for each position after Hadl was traded to the Rams in 1973, so no other signal-caller has been given digits higher than 19 since. Hadl, however, got to keep his No. 21—it was grandfathered in by the league—and he wore it until his retirement from the game after the 1977 season.

NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- K Caleb Sturgis (free agent, Philadelphia)
- TE Virgil Green (free agent, Denver)
- S Jaylen Watkins (free agent, Philadelphia)
- QB Geno Smith (free agent, N.Y. Giants)
- C Mike Pouncey (free agent, Miami)
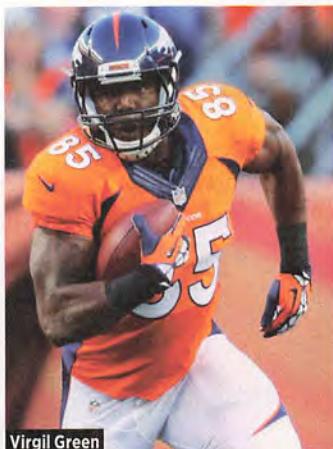
Virgil Green

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Chargers got one of the best value picks in the entire draft in safety **Derwin James**. He was projected to be a top-10 pick by many analysts but he somehow slid. The Chargers grabbed him at No. 17 and that was a huge bargain. James should be able to contribute immediately and he has the ability to be a big-time playmaker. The rest of the draft class was more about the future. Second-round pick Uchenna Nwosu probably will begin his career as a backup linebacker and special-teams player but could develop into a starter down the road. Third-round pick Justin Jones has a chance to be an immediate rotational player on the defensive line.

2018 DRAFT GRADE: B+
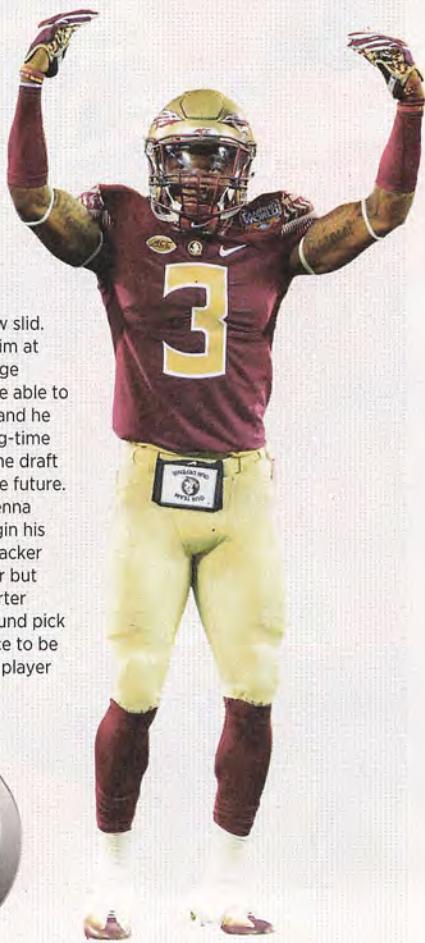
THE CHARGERS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	17	Derwin James	S	6-2	215	22	Florida State
2	48	Uchenna Nwosu	LB	6-2	251	21	USC
3	84	Justin Jones	DT	6-3	309	22	N.C. State
4	119	Kyzir White	LB	6-2	218	22	West Virginia
5	155	Scott Quessenberry	G	6-4	310	23	UCLA
6	191	Dylan Cantrell	WR	6-3	226	24	Texas Tech
7	251	Justin Jackson	RB	6-0	199	22	Northwestern

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Anthony Lynn, **Head Coach;** Ken Whisenhunt, **Offensive Coordinator;** Gus Bradley, **Defensive Coordinator;** George Stewart, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
7	Jones, Cardale	QB	6-5	250	25	3	Ohio State
17	Rivers, Philip	QB	6-5	228	36	15	N.C. State
3	Smith, Geno	QB	6-3	221	27	6	West Virginia

OFFENSIVE LINE
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
72	Barksdale, Joe	T	6-5	326	30	8	LSU
67	Boyko, Brett	T/G	6-6	301	26	1	UNLV
63	Clark, Donavon	G	6-4	315	25	3	Michigan State
66	Feeney, Dan	G	6-4	305	24	2	Indiana
77	Lamp, Forrest	G	6-4	310	24	2	Western Kentucky
76	Okung, Russell	T	6-5	310	30	9	Oklahoma State
53	Pouncey, Mike	C	6-5	298	29	8	Florida
73	Pulley, Spencer	C	6-4	308	25	3	Vanderbilt
78	Schofield, Michael	OL	6-6	301	27	5	Michigan
69	Tevi, Sam	T	6-5	311	23	2	Utah
64	Toner, Cole	G/C	6-5	300	24	2	Harvard

RUNNING BACKS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
30	Ekeler, Austin	RB	5-9	195	23	2	Western State
28	Gordon, Melvin	RB	6-1	215	25	4	Wisconsin
35	Hansbrough, Russell	RB	5-9	195	24	1	Missouri
34	Watt, Derek	FB	6-2	234	25	3	Wisconsin

RECEIVERS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
13	Allen, Keenan	WR	6-2	211	26	6	California
12	Benjamin, Travis	WR	5-10	175	28	7	Miami (Fla.)
83	Bowman, Braedon	TE	6-4	240	24	2	South Alabama
80	Culkin, Sean	TE	6-5	255	25	2	Missouri
11	Davis, Geremy	WR	6-3	217	26	4	Connecticut
88	Green, Virgil	TE	6-5	255	30	8	Nevada
86	Henry, Hunter	TE	6-5	250	23	3	Arkansas
15	Patton, Andre	WR	6-3	210	24	1	Rutgers
82	Scott, Artavis	WR	5-10	190	23	1	Clemson
81	Williams, Mike	WR	6-3	218	23	2	Clemson
16	Williams, Tyrell	WR	6-4	205	26	4	Western Oregon

DEFENSIVE LINE
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
99	Bosa, Joey	DE	6-5	280	23	3	Ohio State
54	Ingram, Melvin	DE	6-2	247	29	7	South Carolina
46	Landrum, Chris	DE	6-2	245	25	3	Jacksonville State
94	Liuget, Corey	DT	6-2	300	28	8	Illinois
92	Mebane, Brandon	DT	6-1	311	33	12	California
93	Philon, Darius	DE	6-1	300	24	4	Arkansas
90	Richardson, Whitney	DE	6-5	251	25	1	Lane
98	Rochell, Isaac	DE	6-3	280	23	1	Notre Dame
71	Square, Damion	DT	6-2	293	29	6	Alabama

LINEBACKERS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
57	Brown, Jatavis	LB	5-11	221	24	3	Akron
48	Dzubnar, Nick	LB	6-1	240	27	4	Cal Poly
51	Emanuel, Kyle	LB	6-3	250	27	4	North Dakota State
49	Onwualu, James	LB	6-1	232	24	2	Notre Dame
52	Perryman, Denzel	LB	5-11	240	24	4	Miami (Fla.)
50	Pullard, Hayes	LB	6-0	240	26	4	USC

DEFENSIVE BACKS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
37	Addae, Jahleel	S	5-10	195	28	6	Central Michigan
43	Davis, Michael	CB	6-2	196	23	2	BYU
26	Hayward, Casey	CB	5-11	192	29	7	Vanderbilt
45	Hendy, A.J.	S	6-0	209	25	1	Maryland
25	Jenkins, Rayshawn	S	6-1	220	24	2	Miami (Fla.)
20	King, Desmond	CB	5-10	201	23	2	Iowa
29	Mager, Craig	CB	5-11	200	26	3	Texas State
31	Phillips, Adrian	S	5-11	210	26	4	Texas
23	Richards, Jeff	DB	6-2	210	27	1	Emporia State
22	Verrett, Jason	CB	5-10	188	27	5	TCU
27	Watkins, Jaylen	DB	5-11	194	26	4	Florida
24	Williams, Trevor	CB	5-11	191	24	3	Penn State

SPECIALISTS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4	Aguayo, Roberto	K	6-0	207	24	2	Florida State
8	Kaser, Drew	P	6-2	206	25	3	Texas A&M
42	Kukwa, Anthony	LS	6-3	231	25	0	Lake Erie
6	Sturgis, Caleb	K	5-9	192	29	6	Florida
47	Windt, Mike	LS	6-1	237	32	9	Cincinnati

KANSAS CITY
CHIEFS

Kareem Hunt, RB

HUNT: REED HOFFMANN / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
@ L.A. Chargers	@ Pittsburgh	San Francisco	@ Denver	Jacksonville	@ New England	Cincinnati	Denver
Sept. 9 / 4:05 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 1 / 8:15 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 10-6 **HOME:** 6-2
CONFERENCE: 8-4 **DIVISION:** 5-1

HEAD COACH **ANDY REID** (SIXTH YEAR, 53-27)
CAREER RECORD: 183-120-1

▶ **ONLINE:** www.chiefs.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @Chiefs
▶ **TICKETS:** 888-99-CHIEFS
▶ **STADIUM:** Arrowhead Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 76,416
▶ **TURF:** Grass

Chiefs are banking that new quarterback Mahomes is going to shine in No. 1 role

BY SETH TRACHTMAN
Street & Smith's correspondent

What a difference a year makes. Last offseason, facing major cap issues, the Chiefs made limited personnel moves as they looked to make one last run at the Super Bowl after finally winning the AFC West for the first time in Andy Reid's tenure. Entering 2018, almost everything has changed.

Kansas City had one more playoff implosion in 2017, adding to a long list. This time it was a wild-card loss to the visiting Titans after leading 21-3 at halftime. As Brett Veach entered his first full offseason as general manager, it was time to blow things up.

Veach wasted no time, as word of trading five-year starting quarterback Alex Smith to Washington got out before the Super Bowl was even played, handing over the reins to last year's No. 10 overall draft choice, Patrick Mahomes, as expected. That move was just the first of several that rocked the foundation of Chiefs Kingdom.

Soon the Chiefs would move on from longtime defensive stalwarts Derrick Johnson and Tamba Hali, trade top cornerback Marcus Peters and make their biggest free-agent splash in years with the signings of Sammy Watkins and Anthony Hitchens.

Reid remains the head honcho, but a new day in Kansas City has come. After a 1-4 playoff record in five years between the pairing of Reid and Smith, his departed quarterback, Chiefs fans hope all the offseason changes result in playoff wins.

OFFENSE

For the second straight year, the Chiefs have been forced to find a new offensive coordinator after their previous one left for a head-coaching position. The primary role of Reid's coordinator since he became a head coach in Philadelphia has been to setup the game plan, with Reid ultimately calling the plays. That trend is likely to continue, now with former running backs coach Eric Bieniemy trying his hand after Matt Nagy left to be the Bears' head coach.

QUARTERBACKS: Chiefs fans are excited for the future because the future is Mahomes. The former Texas Tech star takes over for Smith, who was appreciated after five solid years in Kansas City but rarely took risks. Mahomes' style is quite different, using his unbelievable arm strength to make any throw, even those that might make coaches and fans want to cover their eyes. Kansas City got a preview of Mahomes' readiness when he got a Week 17 start at Denver, throwing

2 PREDICTED FINISH **AFC WEST**

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Patrick Mahomes II
	Chad Henne
FB	Anthony Sherman
RB	Kareem Hunt
	Spencer Ware
LT	Eric Fisher
	Mitchell Schwartz
LG	Bryan Witzmann
	Parker Ehinger
C	Mitch Morse
	Cameron Erving
RG	L. Duvernay-Tardif
	Cameron Erving
RT	Mitchell Schwartz
	Cameron Erving
TE	Travis Kelce
	Demetrius Harris
WR	Tyreek Hill
	Chris Conley
WR	Sammy Watkins
	Demarcus Robinson

DEFENSE
DE	Chris Jones
	Rakeem Nunez-Roches
NT	Xavier Williams
	Derrick Nnadi
DE	Allen Bailey
	Jarvis Jenkins
OLB	Justin Houston
	Tanoh Kpassagnon
ILB	Anthony Hitchens
	Terrance Smith
ILB	Reggie Ragland
	Ukeme Eligwe
OLB	Dee Ford
	Breeland Speaks
CB	David Amerson
	Steven Nelson
CB	Kendall Fuller
	Keith Reaser
SS	Eric Berry
	Leon McQuay III
FS	Daniel Sorensen
	Eric Murray

SPECIALISTS
LS	James Winchester
P	Dustin Colquitt
K	Harrison Butker
KR	De'Anthony Thomas
PR	Tyreek Hill

BYE: WEEK 12 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. ***Mexico City**

Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17
@ Cleveland	Arizona	@ L.A. Rams*	@ Oakland	Baltimore	L.A. Chargers	@ Seattle	Oakland
Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 19 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 2 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 13 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 23 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

KANSAS CITY **CHIEFS**
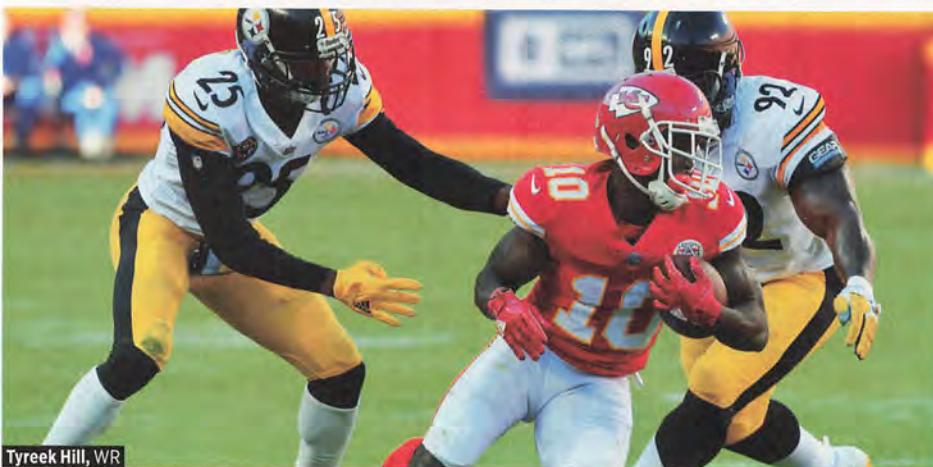
Tyreek Hill, WR

⬂ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
53-27

PL		PL	PL	PL

11-5	9-7	11-5	12-4	10-6
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

for 284 yards and leading the team to a 27-24 win despite playing mostly with other backups.

With the departure of Smith, the Chiefs wanted to add a veteran backup who could help Mahomes in the film room. Chad Henne certainly fits that description, moving on from Jacksonville after six seasons. Former Raider Matt McGloin was also signed in the offseason to compete for the No. 3 job.

RUNNING BACKS: Kareem Hunt was handed the starting tailback job in his rookie season after Spencer Ware injured his knee in the preseason. While Hunt fumbled his first regular-season carry, he hasn't looked back since then. Hunt finished his first game, a nationally televised contest at New England, with 246 yards from scrimmage and three touchdowns. He never fumbled again and managed to lead the NFL in rushing while

averaging 4.9 yards per carry. The third-round pick out of Toledo also showed off good hands and progressed as a blocker as the season wore on.

Kansas City added significant backfield depth this offseason with Damien Williams and Kerwynn Williams, a possible indication that former starter Ware won't be ready for the opener after tearing the PCL and LCL in his right knee last August. Third-down specialist Charcandrick West and Akeem Hunt could also face competition for their roster spots.

WIDE RECEIVERS: The Chiefs asked a lot of Tyreek Hill in his second season after they cut Jeremy Maclin in June to save money. Hill immediately emerged as an elite wide receiver, finishing the season with 1,183 yards receiving and seven touchdowns after averaging 9.7 yards per catch in his rookie season.

The Chiefs splurged on Watkins to the tune of a three-year, $48 million contract. He hasn't looked the same since suffering a fractured foot in 2016, but he's still averaged at least 15 yards per reception in all four of his NFL seasons. A former 1,000-yard receiver with the Bills in 2015, Watkins also has elite deep speed, making him a good fit for the strong-armed Mahomes.

Chris Conley's role becomes unclear after the Watkins signing, but he will certainly find the field when he's healthy. A ruptured Achilles ended his season in October, but Conley showed crisp route-running ability and good hands in his third season. Demarcus Robinson found more snaps after Conley was injured and showed big-play ability and great downfield blocking but was often out of sync with Smith. De'Anthony Thomas and Jehu Chesson mostly contributed

MAHOMES II: JOE MAHONEY / AP; HILL: ED ZURGA / AP

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Chiefs

"The organization is high on **Patrick Mahomes** and for good reason. He made some unbelievable throws in college and last year, and that was with weapons that weren't nearly what he will have to work with as the starter this season. Developing for a year under Andy Reid and Alex Smith was the perfect scenario for him because he did make

some throws that take your breath away, both in good and bad ways. The pressure will be on him to perform with a defense that has a lot of new names and some guys coming off injury. You hope Mahomes won't try to do too much if the defense is bad, but he at least has experience in that situation after playing at Texas Tech. The team will go as far as he can take them."

Dee Ford
2.0 sacks

↘ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/07	W	42-27	New England Patriots
09/17	W	27-20	Philadelphia Eagles
09/24	W	24-10	Los Angeles Chargers
10/02	W	29-20	Washington Redskins
10/08	W	42-34	Houston Texans
10/15	L	13-19	Pittsburgh Steelers
10/19	L	30-31	Oakland Raiders
10/30	W	29-19	Denver Broncos
11/05	L	17-28	Dallas Cowboys
11/19	L	9-12	New York Giants
11/26	L	10-16	Buffalo Bills
12/03	L	31-38	New York Jets
12/10	W	26-15	Oakland Raiders
12/16	W	30-13	Los Angeles Chargers
12/24	W	29-13	Miami Dolphins
12/31	W	27-24	Denver Broncos
2017 RECORD: 10-6			

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
K. Hunt	272	1,327	4.9	69t	8
Smith	60	355	5.9	70	1
West	18	72	4.0	21t	2
Hill	17	59	3.5	16	0
Sherman	14	40	2.9	9	1
A. Hunt	8	23	2.9	11	0
Mahomes	7	10	1.4	5	0
Wilson	3	6	2.0	6	0
Kelce	2	7	3.5	4	0
Spiller	2	0	0.0	1	0
Thomas	1	4	4.0	4	0
Bray	1	0	0.0	0	0
KANSAS CITY	405	1,903	4.7	70	12
OPPONENTS	443	1,890	4.3	27	15

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Kelce	83	1,038	12.5	44	8
Hill	75	1,183	15.8	79t	7
K. Hunt	53	455	8.6	78t	3
Wilson	42	554	13.2	63t	3
West	27	150	5.6	25	2
Robinson	21	212	10.1	33	0
Harris	18	224	12.4	51	1
Thomas	14	143	10.2	57t	2
Conley	11	175	15.9	35	0
Sherman	6	47	7.8	11	0
Travis	5	43	8.6	18	0
A. Hunt	4	31	7.8	20	0
Charles	2	53	26.5	35	0
Chesson	2	18	9.0	10	0
KANSAS CITY	363	4,326	11.9	79t	26
OPPONENTS	325	4,131	12.7	69	23

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Smith	505	341	4,042	26	5
Mahomes	35	22	284	0	1
Bray	1	0	0	0	0
Hill	1	0	0	0	1
Kelce	1	0	0	0	1
KANSAS CITY	543	363	4,104	26	8
OPPONENTS	570	325	3,952	23	16

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
A. Hunt	25	611	24.4	42	0
Thomas	13	305	23.5	39	0
Chesson	3	65	21.7	26	0
West	2	37	18.5	19	0
Wilson	1	18	18.0	18	0
Conley	1	8	8.0	8	0
Sherman	1	7	7.0	7	0
McQuay III	1	0	0.0	0	0
KANSAS CITY	47	1,051	22.4	42	0
OPPONENTS	25	486	19.4	32	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Hill	25	204	8.2	82t	1
Thomas	8	20	2.5	8	0
Sorensen	1	0	0.0	0	0
Robinson	1	-4	-4.0	-4	0
KANSAS CITY	35	220	6.3	82t	1
OPPONENTS	24	164	6.8	49	0

SACKS	KANSAS CITY 31.0, OPPONENTS 37.0

Houston 9.5, Jones 6.5, Bailey 2.0, Ford 2.0, Kpassagnon 2.0, Logan 1.5, Sorensen 1.5, Zombo 1.5, Eligwe 1.0, Murray 1.0, Reaser 1.0, Nunez-Roches 0.5

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	375.4	5
Rushing	118.9	9
Passing	256.5	7
Scoring	25.9	6
Punt returns	6.3	26
Kick returns	22.4	9
Red zone TD%	45.3	29
Total defense	365.1	28
Against rush	118.1	25
Against pass	247.0	29
Points allowed	21.2	15
Interceptions	16	9t
Sacks	31.0	24t
Turnover diff.	+15	2

on special teams last year but have also flashed and give the team solid depth.

At tight end, the Chiefs have one of the best in Travis Kelce, who surpassed 1,000 yards receiving for the second consecutive season in 2017 and added a career-high eight touchdowns. Demetrius Harris remains his backup.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The offensive line remains mostly unchanged heading into 2018, with high-priced players anchoring three of the positions. Kansas City ranked in the middle of the pack with 37 sacks

allowed last year, but its league-leading 4.7 yards per rush was a major tip of the cap despite injuries and personnel issues on the interior.

Eric Fisher continues to do an adquate job at left tackle, though the organization's huge four-year, $63 million contract agreement did turn some heads two years ago. On the other side of the line, Mitchell Schwartz has arguably been the NFL's most stable pass blocker, starting every game in six seasons between Cleveland and Kansas City, but has somehow yet to get Pro Bowl recognition.

The team missed Mitch Morse at center, who played only seven games due to a foot injury. The 2015 second-round pick had proven very durable up until last season. Laurent Duvernay-Tardif has come into his own as both a medical doctor and solid right guard, though he also missed time with a knee injury. Left guard is up for grabs entering the preseason between Bryan Witzmann, former Browns first-round pick Cameron Erving and third-year player Parker Ehinger, who has struggled to get over a torn ACL suffered in his rookie season. The notable loss of Zach

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Kansas City head coach Andy Reid
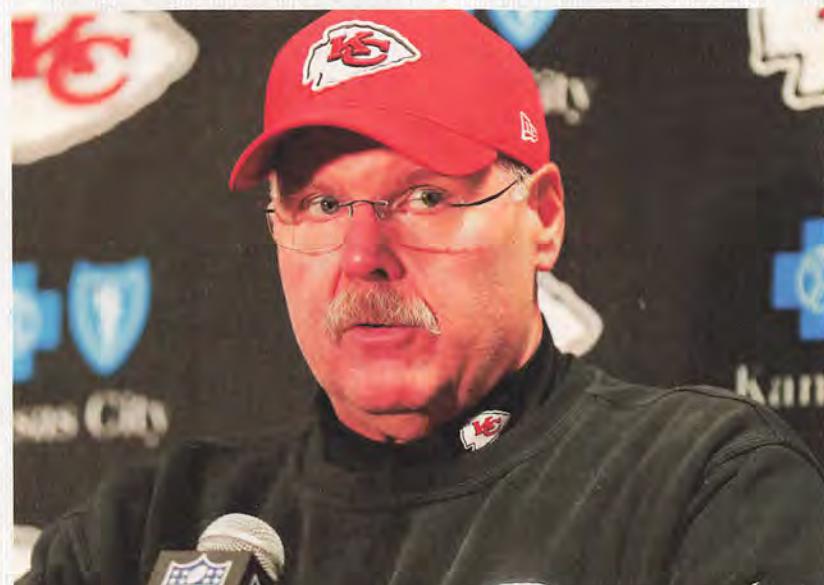
Reid enters his 20th season as an NFL head coach and has been one of the league's most successful during that timeframe with a regular-season record of 183-120-1. A disciple of Mike Holmgren and the West Coast offense in Green Bay, Reid still calls most of the offensive plays. His lack of playoff success and clock-management issues have been common criticisms from fans that he's still hoping to silence with a Super Bowl win after getting to the game as the Eagles' head coach following the 2004 season.

KANSAS CITY **CHIEFS**

Fulton will hurt the team's line depth.

DEFENSE

Kansas City's 28th-ranked defense was the fans' scapegoat after another frustrating playoff showing, but the team opted to retain defensive coordinator Bob Sutton for a sixth season. The former Army head coach honed his craft as a coordinator under Rex Ryan with the Jets and still runs Ryan's 3-4 defensive scheme.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Chris Jones has developed into one of the league's top 3-4 ends and is the clear prize of the team's defensive line entering his third season. He's shown the ability to take over games, as he did in Week Two against Philadelphia with three sacks and an interception, but his play can also go quiet at times. Coming off a torn MCL suffered during the playoff loss, the Chiefs are hoping for another step forward after Jones finished with 6.5 sacks last year.

Allen Bailey is an intimidating presence and a solid contributor entering his eighth season with the Chiefs. He's struggled to stay healthy but did manage to play 14 games last season. The team brought on Xavier Williams to replace Bennie Logan as the nose tackle, and third-round pick Derrick Nnadi will also help. Rakeem Nunez-Roches and Jarvis Jenkins round out the depth for this unit.

LINEBACKERS: The 2018 season will be very different in the linebacker room after the loss of Derrick Johnson and Tamba Hali as well as linebackers coach Gary Gibbs. The team signed former Cowboys inside linebacker Hitchens on a five-year, $45 million contract and also used their top pick on Breeland Speaks. Hitchens will join Reggie Ragland to make up a young, high-upside pair of inside linebackers.

Justin Houston remains one of the team leaders and had much better fortune with his health last season, accumulating 9.5 sacks and 59 total tackles. The Chiefs need a bigger contribution at the outside spot opposite Houston. Former first-round pick Dee Ford missed 10 games last year due to a back injury. Tanoh Kpassagnon, a 2017 second-round pick, is still very raw. Speaks played mostly defensive end at Ole Miss, and the team believes the rookie is ready to contribute now in a hybrid linebacker/end role. Frank Zombo is an adequate fill-in.

SECONDARY: The Chiefs surprisingly traded the elite but enigmatic Marcus Peters in the offseason. He created lots of turnovers in three seasons, but his fiery personality on and off the field seemed to wear on teammates and coaches. Behind Peters, cornerback was a fatal flaw for the defense, but there remains cautious optimism that Kendall Fuller, acquired from Washington in the Alex Smith trade, and former Raider David Amerson will improve that deficiency. Steven Nelson has

THE LAST TIME ...

IMPACT NEWCOMER

The Chiefs are hoping **Sammy Watkins** is the addition that pushes their offense over the top. The deep threat struggled to get on the same page with Jared Goff at times during his lone season with the Rams, but he's a former 1,000-yard receiver who is only 25, having already shown elite ability early in his career with Buffalo.

also done a solid job covering slot receivers when healthy.

Emotional leader Eric Berry is set to return from a torn Achilles that he suffered in the team's huge Week One win at New England. He was certainly missed last season and should provide a huge boost to the struggling secondary. Gone is four-year starter Ron Parker opposite Berry, but the Chiefs are comfortable with Daniel Sorensen and Eric Murray.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Coordinator Dave Toub has presided over an excellent special-teams unit in Kansas City since Reid came on board in 2013.

Hill continued to handle the punt-return duties last season, while kickoffs were shared by Akeem Hunt and Thomas. It remains to be seen if the team will make any changes.

Kicker Harrison Butker was a pleasant surprise, making a franchise-record 23 consecutive field goals after missing his first attempt. Punter Dustin Colquitt has extended his stay in K.C. to a 14th year after re-signing in the offseason. He's been a top punter for much of his career, making two Pro Bowls.

BOTTOM LINE

An offseason with one headlining move after another has made Kansas City one of the most interesting teams to watch in 2018. The offense is set to be one of the most high-powered units in the NFL if Mahomes is able to back up the big talk coming from the team's front office and coaching staff. It remains to be seen if the defense can hold up its end of the bargain.

If nothing else, there is renewed hope in Kansas City for a fanbase that is frustrated by multiple disasters in the playoffs. Whether 2018 is a step forward or a rebuilding year is the big question.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B
2018 STOCKWATCH: OUTPERFORM
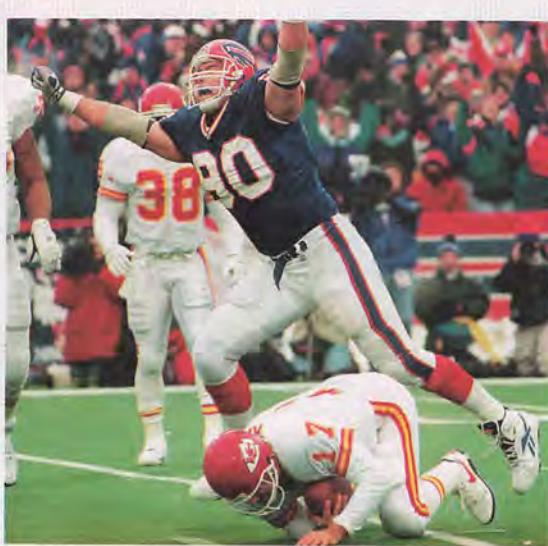
NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **WR** Sammy Watkins
  (free agent, L.A. Rams)
- **CB** Kendall Fuller
  (trade, Washington)
- **LB** Anthony Hitchens
  (free agent, Dallas)
- **CB** David Amerson
  (free agent, Oakland)
- **DT** Xavier Williams
  (free agent, Arizona)
- **QB** Chad Henne
  (free agent, Jacksonville)

Anthony Hitchens

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Chiefs lacked a first-round pick after trading it last year to move up for Patrick Mahomes, but they still found defensive impact on the second day of the draft. Reid gave high praise to second-round pick Breeland Speaks, who has a chance to see significant snaps immediately on the Kansas City defense. The nose-tackle spot was a major need after losing Bennie Logan, and third-round pick Derrick Nnadi should be able to help plug the run on the interior immediately. Late third-round dime linebacker Dorian O'Daniel could also work his way into the lineup on passing downs, in addition to having a regular role on special teams.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
C

THE CHIEFS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
2	46	Breeland Speaks	DE/LB	6-3	285	22	Ole Miss
3	75	Derrick Nnadi	DT	6-1	317	22	Florida State
3	100	Dorian O'Daniel	LB	6-1	220	24	Clemson
4	124	Armani Watts	S	5-11	205	22	Texas A&M
6	196	Tremon Smith	CB	6-0	190	22	Central Arkansas
6	198	Reginald McKenzie	G	6-3	320	21	Tennessee

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Andy Reid, **Head Coach**; Eric Bieniemy, **Offensive Coordinator**; Bob Sutton, **Defensive Coordinator**; Dave Toub, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4 Henne, Chad	QB	6-3	222	33	11	Michigan
15 Mahomes II, Patrick	QB	6-3	230	22	2	Texas Tech
5 McGloin, Matt	QB	6-1	210	28	5	Penn State

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
65 Devey, Jordan	OL	6-6	320	30	5	Memphis
76 Duvernay-Tardif, Laurent	OL	6-5	321	27	5	McGill (Canada)
79 Ehinger, Parker	OL	6-6	310	25	3	Cincinnati
75 Erving, Cameron	OL	6-5	313	26	4	Florida State
72 Fisher, Eric	OL	6-7	315	27	6	Central Michigan
64 Gordon, Dillon	OL	6-4	322	25	2	LSU
62 Johnson, Kaleb	OL	6-4	300	25	1	Rutgers
61 Morse, Mitch	OL	6-6	305	26	4	Missouri
71 Schwartz, Mitchell	OL	6-5	320	29	7	California
70 Witzmann, Bryan	OL	6-7	320	28	4	South Dakota State
77 Wylie, Andrew	OL	6-6	309	24	1	Eastern Michigan

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
31 Hunt, Akeem	RB	5-10	185	25	4	Purdue
27 Hunt, Kareem	RB	5-11	208	23	2	Toledo
42 Sherman, Anthony	RB	5-10	242	29	8	Connecticut
32 Ware, Spencer	RB	5-10	229	26	5	LSU
35 West, Charcandrick	RB	5-10	205	27	5	Abilene Christian
26 Williams, Damien	RB	5-11	224	26	5	Oklahoma
25 Williams, Kerwynn	RB	5-8	198	27	5	Utah State

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
89 Amaro, Jace	TE	6-5	265	26	4	Texas Tech
83 Braverman, Daniel	WR	5-10	185	24	1	Western Michigan
82 Charles, Orson	TE	6-3	247	27	3	Georgia
80 Chesson, Jehu	WR	6-3	203	24	2	Michigan
17 Conley, Chris	WR	6-3	205	25	4	Georgia
12 Dieter, Gehrig	WR	6-3	207	25	1	Alabama
88 Firkser, Anthony	TE	6-2	241	23	1	Harvard
84 Harris, Demetrius	TE	6-7	230	27	5	Wisconsin-Milwaukee
10 Hill, Tyreek	WR	5-10	185	24	3	West Alabama
87 Kelce, Travis	TE	6-5	260	28	6	Cincinnati
19 Kemp, Marcus	WR	6-4	185	23	1	Hawaii
11 Robinson, Demarcus	WR	6-1	203	23	3	Florida
81 Shippen, Brandon	WR	5-11	196	24	1	Temple
9 Spruce, Nelson	WR	6-1	210	25	2	Colorado
13 Thomas, De'Anthony	WR	5-8	176	25	5	Oregon
14 Watkins, Sammy	WR	6-1	211	25	5	Clemson
81 Wright, Tim	TE	6-4	220	28	5	Rutgers

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
77 Augusta, Josh	DL	6-4	335	24	1	Missouri
97 Bailey, Allen	DL	6-3	288	29	8	Miami (Fla.)
90 Charles, Stefan	DL	6-5	302	30	5	Regina (Canada)
74 Hamilton, Justin	DL	6-2	315	25	3	Louisiana
94 Jenkins, Jarvis	DL	6-4	300	30	7	Clemson
95 Jones, Chris	DL	6-6	308	24	3	Mississippi State
93 McGill, T.Y.	DL	6-0	299	25	4	N.C. State
99 Nunez-Roches, Rakeem	DL	6-2	307	25	4	Southern Miss
98 Purcell, Mike	DL	6-3	303	27	4	Wyoming
98 Williams, Xavier	DL	6-2	309	26	4	Northern Iowa

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
45 Eligwe, Ukeme	LB	6-2	239	24	2	Georgia Southern
55 Ford, Dee	LB	6-2	252	27	5	Auburn
53 Hitchens, Anthony	LB	6-0	235	26	5	Iowa
54 Holmes, Tyrone	LB	6-2	253	25	2	Montana
50 Houston, Justin	LB	6-3	258	29	8	Georgia
92 Kpassagnon, Tanoh	LB	6-7	280	24	2	Villanova
52 Nicolas, Dadi	LB	6-3	235	25	3	Virginia Tech
59 Ragland, Reggie	LB	6-2	252	24	3	Alabama
48 Smith, Terrance	LB	6-2	235	25	3	Florida State
51 Zombo, Frank	LB	6-3	254	31	9	Central Michigan

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
24 Amerson, David	DB	6-1	205	26	6	N.C. State
29 Berry, Eric	DB	6-0	212	29	9	Tennessee
47 Chappell, Devin	DB	6-2	199	24	2	Oregon State
43 Dorleant, Makinton	DB	5-11	182	25	2	Northern Iowa
23 Fuller, Kendall	DB	5-11	198	23	3	Virginia Tech
22 Golden, Robert	DB	5-11	202	27	7	Arizona
31 Iworah, Prince Charles	DB	5-11	193	25	2	Western Kentucky
6 Lampkin, Ashton	DB	6-0	189	24	2	Oklahoma State
34 McQuay III, Leon	DB	6-2	185	23	1	USC
21 Murray, Eric	DB	5-11	199	24	3	Minnesota
20 Nelson, Steven	DB	5-11	194	25	4	Oregon State
44 Price, Sheldon	DB	6-2	198	27	3	UCLA
40 Reaser, Keith	DB	6-0	190	27	3	Florida Atlantic
24 Redmond, Will	DB	6-0	186	24	3	Mississippi State
49 Sorensen, Daniel	DB	6-2	208	28	5	BYU
46 Sterns, Jordan	DB	5-11	198	24	1	Oklahoma State

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
7 Butker, Harrison	K	6-4	205	23	2	Georgia Tech
2 Colquitt, Dustin	P	6-3	210	36	14	Tennessee
41 Winchester, James	LS	6-3	240	29	4	Oklahoma

OAKLAND
RAIDERS

Derek Carr, QB
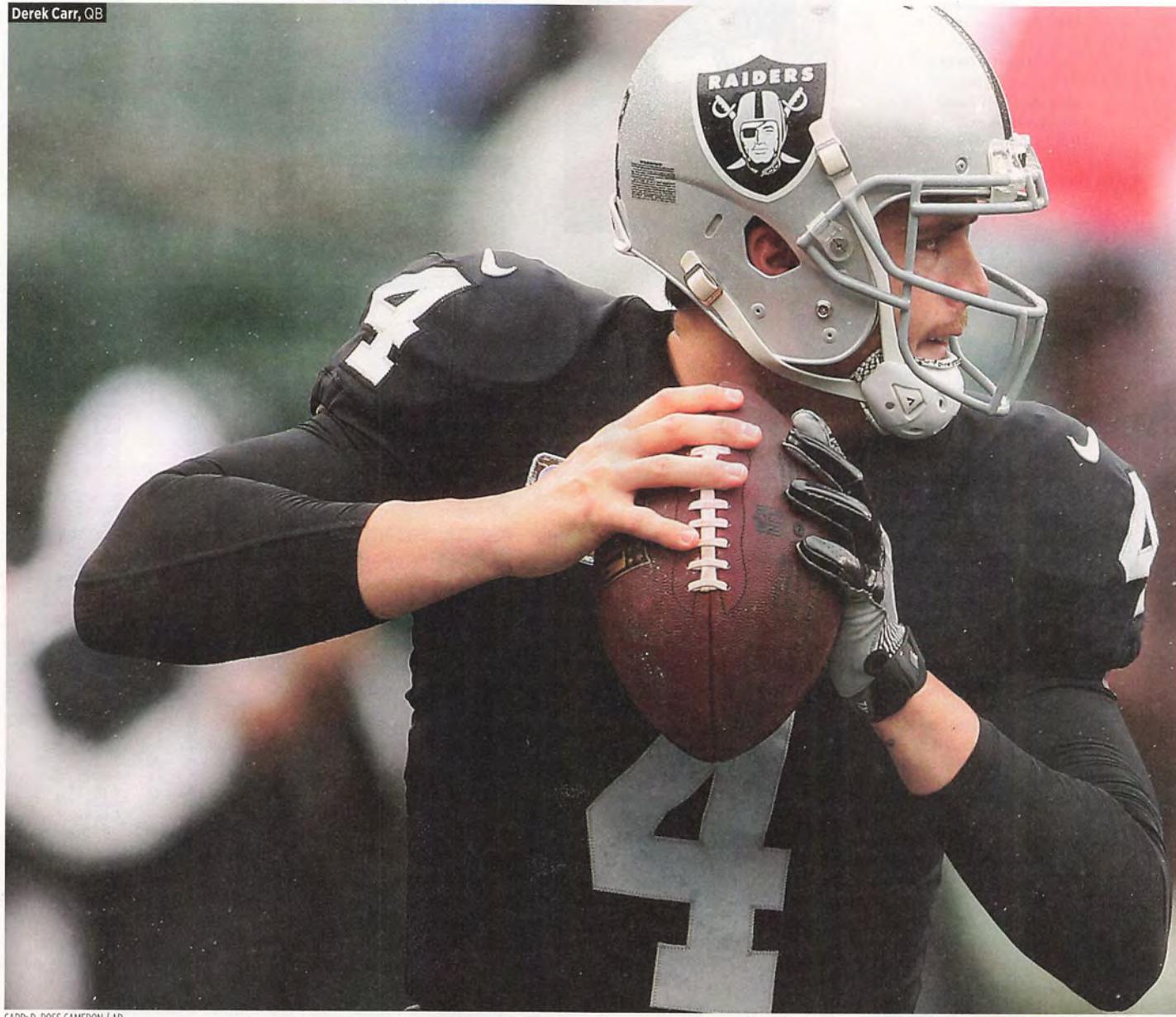
CARR: D. ROSS CAMERON / AP

⬊ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 8	Week 9
L.A. Rams	**@ Denver**	**@ Miami**	**Cleveland**	**@ L.A. Chargers**	**Seattle***	**Indianapolis**	**@ San Francisco**
Sept. 10 / 10:20 PM	Sept. 16 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 7 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 4:05 PM	Nov. 1 / 8:20 PM

RAIDERS

Gruden remaking Raiders to play his style of football

BY STEVE CORKRAN
RaidersSnakePit.com

Local hero Jack Del Rio was cast aside by owner Mark Davis to make room for one-time golden boy Jon Gruden, with the hope that Gruden can build the Raiders into an elite team by the time they arrive in Las Vegas, if not this season.

Bringing back a fan favorite like Gruden is a nice start, but nothing more. It's also a move that Davis had to make so that he could create the kind of buzz necessary to sell enough personal-seat licenses/tickets in advance of the new stadium opening.

Gruden doesn't care about any of that stuff. He is all about football. To that end, he realizes that he has his work cut out for him, as evidenced by the massive roster overhaul in the three-plus months since he was hired for his second stint as Oakland's head coach.

Time will tell if the moves are the kind that will make a difference. Davis is tired of wasting time waiting for a return to relevance. The Raiders haven't won a playoff game since the 2002 postseason, when Gruden and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers thrashed them in the Super Bowl.

For that to change, they're going to have to bounce back from a 6-10 season. Davis did his part by going all-in and giving Gruden a 10-year, $100 million contract. Gruden has responded by remaking the team in his vision. It takes more than an infusion of cash and new players to succeed, though.

OFFENSE

Greg Olson is back as Oakland's offensive coordinator for the second time. That should help quarterback Derek Carr, who worked under Olson his rookie season but regressed last year with Todd Downing overseeing an NFL offense for the first time. The big change, though, is Gruden is going to call the plays. He prefers a run-heavy attack, which sets up the play-action pass, and that means a heavier dose of Marshawn Lynch than last season. Under Gruden, Carr will be entrusted with calling more audibles than at any point in his first four seasons.

QUARTERBACKS: Carr was a favorite of Gruden's when he appeared on "Gruden's Quarterback Camp" show on ESPN before the 2014 NFL Draft, and they talked about winning Super Bowls. Now that they are reunited, they'll get the chance to see if they can establish the kind of relationship Gruden shared with Rich Gannon and Brad Johnson more than 15 years ago. If so, the Raiders' offense shouldn't have a problem regaining the form it showed in 2016, when it was one of the league's most potent attacks. Carr regressed last season under first-year coordinator Downing, as he looked uncomfortable most games. That manifested itself in too many short throws, not waiting for plays to develop and putting up too many passes for grabs. Olson and Gruden will refine Carr's

3 PREDICTED FINISH **AFC WEST**

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Derek Carr
	EJ Manuel
FB	Keith Smith
RB	Marshawn Lynch
	Doug Martin
LT	Donald Penn
	Kolton Miller
LG	Kelechi Osemele
	Vadal Alexander
C	Rodney Hudson
	Jon Feliciano
RG	Gabe Jackson
	Denver Kirkland
RT	Breno Giacomini
	Brandon Parker
TE	Jared Cook
	Lee Smith
WR	Jordy Nelson
	Seth Roberts
WR	Amari Cooper
	Martavis Bryant

DEFENSE

DE	Bruce Irvin
	Arden Key
DT	Eddie Vanderdoes
	P.J. Hall
NT	Justin Ellis
	Maurice Hurst
DE	Khalil Mack
	Mario Edwards Jr.
SLB	Cory James
	Shilique Calhoun
MLB	Tahir Whitehead
	Marquel Lee
WLB	Nicholas Morrow
	Kyle Wilber
CB	Gareon Conley
	Nick Nelson
CB	Rashaan Melvin
	Daryl Worley
SS	Karl Joseph
	Obi Melifonwu
FS	Marcus Gilchrist
	Shalom Luani

SPECIALISTS

LS	Andrew DePaola
P	Johnny Townsend
K	Giorgio Tavecchio
KR	Dwayne Harris
PR	Jalen Richard

BYE: WEEK 7   Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *London

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
L.A. Chargers	@ Arizona	@ Baltimore	Kansas City	Pittsburgh	@ Cincinnati	Denver	@ Kansas City
Nov. 11 / 4:05 PM	Nov. 18 / 4:05 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 9 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 24 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

OAKLAND **RAIDERS**

Khalil Mack, DE

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
32-48

4-12	3-13	7-9	12-4	6-10
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion
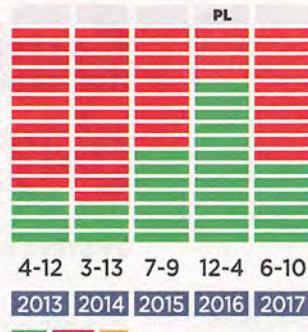
mechanics and restore his confidence, which should translate into more big plays and improved performance. Veteran EJ Manuel was re-signed as the primary backup and third-year player Connor Cook will get a chance to keep progressing.

RUNNING BACKS: Gruden made bringing back Lynch a top priority, but only with assurances from Lynch that he would be in tip-top shape from the outset and that he was fully committed to carrying a sizable workload. From there, Gruden set about bolstering the blocking in an attempt to make the run game a focal point of the offense. Lynch still has plenty left as a lead back despite being age 32. Gruden also signed veteran Doug Martin, who averaged 2.9 yards per carry each of the past two seasons but has two 1,400-yard-plus seasons on his resume. Martin will compete for playing time in

relief of Lynch, along with returners Jalen Richard, DeAndre Washington and Elijah Hood. Keith Smith was signed to take the place of long-time fullback Jamize Olawale. Make no mistake, though, the run game is going to be only as good as Lynch goes. Gruden has done his part in laying the groundwork for that success.

RECEIVERS: Amari Cooper has been told that he is going to be a "focal point" of the offense, which became even more evident when Gruden released Michael Crabtree and the Raiders picked up Cooper's fifth-year option. Cooper was another player who suffered a precipitous drop in production in Downing's listless offense. There's no reason why Cooper can't regain the form he showed his first two seasons, when he surpassed 1,000 yards receiving and looked like one of the league's best wideouts. With Crabtree cast aside, Gruden signed Jordy

Nelson and traded for Martavis Bryant. Nelson will be 33 this season, and he is fresh from a career-worst performance in terms of yards per catch (9.1). Bryant gives Carr the kind of consistent deep threat he hasn't had during his four-year NFL career. Dwayne Harris and Seth Roberts are capable backups, with draftee Marcell Ateman also vying for a roster spot. Jared Cook is an above-average receiving tight end, and he is complemented by blocking tight ends Lee Smith and Derek Carrier.

OFFENSIVE LINE: Kelechi Osemele, Rodney Hudson and Gabe Jackson comprise one of the best interior trios in the league. Gruden and offensive line coach Tom Cable are hell-bent on firming up the tackle spots in hopes of putting together a unit that rivals the Dallas Cowboys. To that end, Gruden cut Marshall Newhouse and signed Breno Giacomini to play right tackle. He then

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Raiders

"It's hard to get a read on this team, given they have changed so much since last season. But you have to like their chances in a division where Derek Carr is the best quarterback, Khalil Mack is the best defender, Amari Cooper has the potential to be the best receiver and Jon Gruden is the best coach. It will be interesting to see if Gruden still has that certain way with

players, where they feed off his enthusiasm and intensity. That's no guarantee. Just ask some of the coaches who have come and gone in recent years, while Gruden was behind a microphone. For me, there's just too many new faces, on the coaching staff and the roster, to think that everything is going to come together this season. Give Gruden a year to get back into things and then look out. This is a team to keep an eye on in the coming years, no doubt."

⬊ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	26-16	Tennessee Titans
09/17	W	45-20	New York Jets
09/24	L	10-27	Washington Redskins
10/01	L	10-16	Denver Broncos
10/08	L	17-30	Baltimore Ravens
10/15	L	16-17	Los Angeles Chargers
10/19	W	31-30	Kansas City Chiefs
10/29	L	14-34	Buffalo Bills
11/05	W	27-24	Miami Dolphins
11/19	L	8-33	New England Patriots
11/26	W	21-14	Denver Broncos
12/03	W	24-17	New York Giants
12/10	L	15-26	Kansas City Chiefs
12/17	L	17-20	Dallas Cowboys
12/25	L	10-19	Philadelphia Eagles
12/31	L	10-30	Los Angeles Chargers

2017 RECORD: 6-10

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Lynch	207	891	4.3	51t	7
Washington	57	153	2.7	11	2
Richard	56	275	4.9	52t	1
Carr	23	66	2.9	32	0
Patterson	13	121	9.3	47t	2
Olawale	9	43	4.8	11	1
Manuel	2	15	7.5	10	0
King	2	-14	-7.0	-3	0
Cooper	1	4	4.0	4	0
OAKLAND	370	1,554	4.2	52t	13
OPPONENTS	433	1,743	4.0	48t	11

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Crabtree	58	618	10.7	41t	8
Cook	54	688	12.7	35	2
Cooper	48	680	14.2	87t	7
Roberts	43	455	10.6	29	1
Washington	34	197	5.8	15	1
Patterson	31	309	10.0	59	0
Richard	27	256	9.5	39	1
Lynch	20	151	7.6	25	0
Holton	9	218	24.2	64t	3
Walford	9	80	8.9	26	0
Smith	8	76	9.5	21	0
Olawale	6	33	5.5	9	0
OAKLAND	347	3,761	10.8	87t	23
OPPONENTS	361	4,046	11.2	74	24

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Carr	515	323	3,496	22	13
Manuel	43	24	265	1	1
OAKLAND	558	347	3,761	23	14
OPPONENTS	530	361	3,858	24	5

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Patterson	19	538	28.3	49	0
Richard	8	90	11.3	17	0
Washington	5	86	17.2	26	0
Feliciano	1	15	15.0	15	0
Olawale	1	9	9.0	9	0
OAKLAND	34	738	21.7	49	0
OPPONENTS	15	298	19.9	40	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Richard	26	155	6.0	19	0
Holton	1	0	0.0	0	0
OAKLAND	27	155	5.7	19	0
OPPONENTS	32	205	6.4	29	0

SACKS	OAKLAND 31.0, OPPONENTS 24.0

Mack 10.5, Irvin 8.0, Autry 5.0, Edwards 3.5, Bowman 1.5, Joseph 1.0, Ward 1.0, Ellis 0.5

⬊ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	321.1	17t
Rushing	97.1	25
Passing	220.2	16
Scoring	18.8	23
Punt returns	5.7	30
Kick returns	21.7	16
Red zone TD%	58.8	8
Total defense	350.1	23
Against rush	108.9	12
Against pass	241.1	26
Points allowed	22.3	20
Interceptions	5	32
Sacks	31.0	24t
Turnover diff.	-14	29t

used a first-round draft pick on Kolton Miller and a third-rounder on Brandon Parker, with the intent of having those guys replace left tackle Donald Penn, 35, and Giacomini at some point this season, if not right away. Denver Kirkland, David Sharpe, Vadal Alexander and Jon Feliciano will battle for roster spots as backups. This has the makings of the team's strongest unit.

DEFENSE

New coordinator Paul Guenther inherits a defense with a great pass-rushing duo but little else in terms of impact players. That's where his well-disguised scheme comes into play. He'll get more from his defense through scheming until young players such as Gareon Conley and Mario Edwards Jr. blossom and more help arrives. The desired results might not come right away, but Guenther is a clear-cut upgrade over 2017 coordinators Ken Norton Jr. and John Pagano.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Guenther made the pass rush a high priority when he was hired by Gruden. His first big move was converting Bruce Irvin from a strongside linebacker into a rush end as a means of taking advantage of Irvin's best attribute. The Raiders now have one of the best end tandems in the league with Irvin and perennial Pro Bowler Khalil Mack, but the line overall lacks proven playmakers. As a result, Gruden used a second-round draft pick on tackle P.J. Hall, a third-rounder on end Arden Key and a fifth-rounder on Maurice Hurst. Hall shined at Sam Houston State, where he recorded 86.5 tackles for loss and blocked 14 kicks as a four-year starter. Key graded out as a first-round talent, but he had some off-field issues that led to some teams questioning whether he was worth the risk. Hurst was projected as

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Oakland head coach Jon Gruden

Gruden worked under the likes of Paul Hackett, George Seifert and Mike Holmgren, from whom he learned the nuances of Bill Walsh's West Coast offense. He has continued to study offenses and fine-tune his approach. He isn't afraid to open up the passing game but his offensive philosophy still places a heavy emphasis on establishing a strong running game, with extensive usage of a fullback, multiple tight ends and stout offensive linemen. Gruden prefers to call his own plays while, at the same time, having a quarterback so well-versed in recognizing defensive schemes that he is comfortable changing plays at the line of scrimmage.

OAKLAND **RAIDERS**

a first-rounder until he was flagged for a heart condition at the Combine. Tackle Justin Ellis was re-signed and anchors the middle. Edwards Jr., Eddie Vanderdoes and Treyvon Hester provide adequate depth.

LINEBACKERS: With Irvin moving to end, veteran Tahir Whitehead is the only unquestioned starter on the roster. That doesn't mean the Raiders don't have promising options. They bring back young players Cory James, Marquel Lee, Nicholas Morrow, Emmanuel Lamur and Shilique Calhoun. Still, this unit isn't any better overall than it was last season, when the linebackers were more of a liability than an asset overall. That changes if the Raiders re-sign NaVorro Bowman before the season begins, and that's a distinct possibility. Bowman no longer is the dominant player he was with the 49ers, but he's better and more consistent than the younger options on the roster. Of all the changes made to the roster this offseason, few have affected the linebacker position. Brady Sheldon, Kyle Wilber and Azeem Victor are fighting for roster spots and playing time, most likely on special teams.

SECONDARY: Another season, another batch of cornerback hopefuls. That's been the way things have gone since general manager Reggie McKenzie

took the reins of personnel moves six years ago. Sean Smith and David Amerson are gone, as is No. 3 corner T.J. Carrie. In their place are Rashaan Melvin, Daryl Worley and Shareece Wright. Melvin has the talent to be the Raiders' best corner since Nnamdi Asomugha. If 2017 first-round draft pick Gareon Conley overcomes the shin injury that limited him to two games last season, the Raiders finally have a shot at fielding an impressive starting tandem, with Worley in line to be the nickel back. Karl Joseph and free-agent signee Marcus Gilchrist will be the starting safeties, which is an upgrade over last season. The remaining roster spots are up for grabs among draftee Nick Nelson, Obi Melifonwu, Reggie Nelson, Shalom Luani, Dexter McDonald, Antonio Hamilton and Wright, among others.

SPECIAL TEAMS: This unit's coordinator, Rich Bisaccia, was reunited with Gruden–they coached together in Tampa from 2002-08–and wasted little time exerting his influence. He ended ties with longtime kicker Sebastian Janikowski, punter Marquette King, long snapper Jon Condo and kick returner Cordarrelle Patterson. In turn, he signed off on Giorgio Tavecchio being the kicker for a second season, brought in Andrew DePaola to replace Condo and made

IMPACT NEWCOMER

Rashaan Melvin is the kind of shutdown cornerback the Raiders have lacked since Nnamdi Asomugha left for the Eagles in free agency. He gives the Raiders a corner capable of neutralizing the opposing team's No. 1 receiver most games and someone who doesn't need safety help, which frees up another defender in the secondary.

Dwayne Harris the kick returner. Johnny Townsend was drafted in the fifth round to replace King. Before the season starts, Bisaccia will have to decide whether Jalen Richard is the answer on punt returns, which is a huge question mark. Richard tied for the league high with six fumbled punt returns last season. Harris and Ryan Switzer are on standby if Richard falters in the slightest. Bisaccia also brought in proven kick-coverage/return players in Keith Smith, Griff Whalen, Lamur and Wilber. Still, this marks the first time in a decade or so that the Raiders core special teams players aren't familiar faces and known quantities.

BOTTOM LINE

The Raiders have a decidedly different look this season, from the coaching staff down through the 53-man roster. That doesn't necessarily translate into being a better football team. Despite all the turnover, Oakland didn't really add any proven impact players, though second-year cornerback Conley, rookie offensive tackle Miller, rookie defensive end Key and rookie defensive tackle Hurst have a chance to join the likes of Mack, Carr, Irvin and the interior of the offensive line as such. On the bright side, none of the other AFC West teams did much to convince the masses that they are going to be any better than last season. It wouldn't be a surprise if the Raiders win the division but then lose their first playoff game. This is a team in full-blown transition.

2018 TEAM GRADE B-
2018 STOCKWATCH HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...

... Jon Gruden coached a game for the Raiders was Jan. 19, 2002, when Oakland lost a heartbreaker in overtime, 16-13, to New England in the Divisional Playoffs. It was a devastating loss for the Raiders, who led 13-3 with under eight minutes to go but allowed Patriots quarterback Tom Brady to lead his team down the field twice before the end of regulation for scoring drives, including a 45-yard field goal by Adam Vinatieri with 27 seconds left to send the game into OT. Oakland never saw the ball in the extra period as the Pats won the toss and Brady ate up more than eight minutes of clock on a 61-yard drive that ended with a game-winning 23-yard boot by Vinatieri.

↘ NEW ARRIVALS

- **CB** Rashaan Melvin
(free agent, Indianapolis)
- **LB** Tahir Whitehead
(free agent, Detroit)
- **S** Marcus Gilchrist
(free agent, Houston)
- **WR** Jordy Nelson
(free agent, Green Bay)
- **RB** Doug Martin
(free agent, Tampa Bay)
- **OT** Breno Giacomini
(free agent, Houston)

Jordy Nelson

THE DRAFT REPORT

2018 DRAFT GRADE

B-

The Raiders went for a blend of quality and quantity in this year's draft, as head coach Jon Gruden traded down with the team's first-round and second-round picks so that he could acquire more picks overall. His first four selections netted offensive tackle **Kolton Miller**, defensive tackle P.J. Hall, offensive tackle Brandon Parker and defensive end Arden Key, none of whom is regarded as a surefire starter this season. Maurice Hurst in the fifth round was a great gamble, as he could emerge as the anchor to the Raiders' D-line. Perhaps of more concern, Gruden traded down and picked Miller and Hall when several potential impact players were available. He balanced that out by trading up to get Parker and Key, then pouncing on Hurst and Nick Nelson in the middle rounds. On the upside, it's conceivable that Miller, Parker, Hall and Hurst will earn starting spots before long, if not right away, and Key will see significant time as a situational rusher.
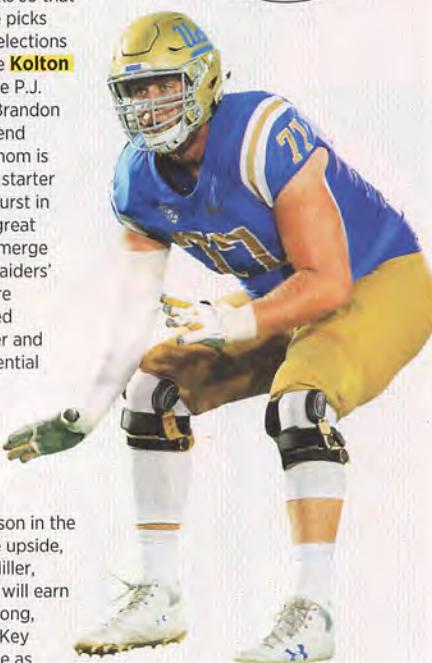
↘ THE RAIDERS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	15	Kolton Miller	T	6-8	309	23	UCLA
2	57	P.J. Hall	DT	6-1	310	23	Sam Houston State
3	65	Brandon Parker	T	6-7	309	22	North Carolina A&T
3	87	Arden Key	DE	6-6	265	22	LSU
4	110	Nick Nelson	CB	5-11	208	22	Wisconsin
5	140	Maurice Hurst	DT	6-2	282	23	Michigan
5	173	Johnny Townsend	P	6-1	202	23	Florida
6	216	Azeem Victor	LB	6-2	240	23	Washington
7	228	Marcell Ateman	WR	6-4	220	23	Oklahoma State

↘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Jon Gruden, **Head Coach;** Greg Olson, **Offensive Coordinator;** Paul Guenther, **Defensive Coordinator;** Rich Bisaccia, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4	Carr, Derek	QB	6-3	214	27	5	Fresno State
18	Cook, Connor	QB	6-4	217	25	3	Michigan State
8	Johnson, Josh	QB	6-3	219	32	7	San Diego
3	Manuel, EJ	QB	6-4	237	28	6	Florida State

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
74	Alexander, Vadal	G/T	6-5	326	24	3	LSU
76	Feliciano, Jon	OL	6-4	323	26	4	Miami (Fla.)
68	Giacomini, Breno	T	6-7	320	32	11	Louisville
61	Hudson, Rodney	C	6-2	300	29	8	Florida State
66	Jackson, Gabe	G	6-3	336	27	5	Mississippi State
79	Kirkland, Denver	G	6-5	340	24	3	Arkansas
70	Osemele, Kelechi	OL	6-5	330	29	7	Iowa State
72	Penn, Donald	T	6-4	340	35	13	Utah State
71	Sharpe, David	T	6-6	357	22	2	Florida
67	Silberman, Ian	OL	6-5	306	25	2	Boston College
65	Simmons, Jordan	G	6-3	339	24	1	USC
62	Stone, James	C	6-3	291	25	3	Tennessee
69	Ware, Jylan	T	6-8	295	24	2	Alabama State

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
34	Hood, Elijah	RB	6-0	220	22	1	North Carolina
24	Lynch, Marshawn	RB	5-11	215	32	11	California
28	Martin, Doug	RB	5-9	223	29	7	Boise State
30	Richard, Jalen	RB	5-8	207	24	3	Southern Miss
41	Smith, Keith	FB	6-0	240	26	5	San Jose State
33	Washington, DeAndre	RB	5-8	204	25	3	Texas Tech

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
81	Brown, Pharaoh	TE	6-5	246	24	1	Oregon
10	Bryant, Martavis	WR	6-4	211	26	4	Clemson
85	Carrier, Derek	TE	6-4	244	28	6	Beloit
87	Cook, Jared	TE	6-5	254	31	10	South Carolina
89	Cooper, Amari	WR	6-1	211	24	4	Alabama
17	Harris, Dwayne	WR	5-11	206	30	8	East Carolina
14	Hatcher, Keon	WR	6-1	212	23	1	Arkansas
16	Holton, Johnny	WR	6-0	190	27	3	Cincinnati
82	Nelson, Jordy	WR	6-3	217	33	11	Kansas State
10	Roberts, Seth	WR	6-2	195	27	4	West Alabama
86	Smith, Lee	TE	6-6	265	30	8	Marshall
15	Switzer, Ryan	WR	5-8	185	23	2	North Carolina
13	Whalen, Griff	WR	5-11	190	28	6	Stanford
19	Whitney, Isaac	WR	6-2	204	24	1	USC

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
99	Brown, Fadol	DE	6-4	282	25	1	Ole Miss
98	Bryant, Armonty	DE	6-4	265	28	5	East Central (Okla.)
96	Carradine, Tank	DL	6-4	270	28	6	Florida State
97	Edwards Jr., Mario	DE	6-3	280	24	4	Florida State
78	Ellis, Justin	DT	6-2	334	27	5	Louisiana Tech
90	Hester, Treyvon	DT	6-3	300	25	2	Toledo
51	Irvin, Bruce	DE	6-3	260	30	7	West Virginia
52	Mack, Khalil	DE	6-3	252	27	5	Buffalo
93	Saint Fleur, Joby	DL	6-4	253	25	1	NW Oklahoma State
92	Soto, Shakir	DL	6-3	290	24	1	Pittsburgh
94	Vanderdoes, Eddie	DT	6-4	305	23	2	UCLA

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
91	Calhoun, Shilique	LB	6-4	251	26	3	Michigan State
47	Cowser, James	LB	6-3	244	27	3	Southern Utah
57	James, Cory	LB	6-0	235	25	3	Colorado State
54	Lamur, Emmanuel	LB	6-4	245	29	7	Kansas State
55	Lee, Marquel	LB	6-3	240	22	2	Wake Forest
50	Morrow, Nicholas	LB	6-0	224	23	2	Greenville
43	Sheldon, Brady	LB	6-5	230	25	1	Ferris State
59	Whitehead, Tahir	LB	6-2	241	28	7	Temple
58	Wilber, Kyle	LB	6-4	245	29	7	Wake Forest

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
21	Conley, Gareon	CB	6-0	195	23	2	Ohio State
31	Gilchrist, Marcus	S	5-10	198	29	8	Clemson
40	Golson, Senquez	CB	5-9	176	25	3	Ole Miss
29	Hall, Leon	CB	5-11	195	33	11	Michigan
32	Hamilton, Antonio	CB	6-0	185	25	3	South Carolina State
25	Harris, Erik	S	6-3	225	28	3	California (Pa.)
38	Hillary, Darius	DB	5-10	183	25	1	Wisconsin
42	Joseph, Karl	S	5-10	205	25	3	West Virginia
26	Luani, Shalom	S	6-0	205	24	2	Washington State
23	McDonald, Dexter	CB	6-1	200	26	4	Kansas
20	Melifonwu, Obi	S	6-3	224	24	2	Connecticut
22	Melvin, Rashaan	CB	6-2	196	28	6	Northern Illinois
37	Mitchel, Tevin	DB	6-0	192	26	2	Arkansas
27	Nelson, Reggie	S	5-11	210	34	12	Florida
39	Richardson, Shaquille	DB	6-0	194	26	1	Arizona
36	Worley, Daryl	CB	6-1	205	23	2	West Virginia
35	Wright, Shareece	CB	5-11	184	31	8	USC

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
48	DePaola, Andrew	LS	6-2	230	31	5	Rutgers
2	Tavecchio, Giorgio	K	5-10	182	28	2	California
6	Wadman, Colby	P	6-1	213	22	1	UC Davis

DENVER
BRONCOS

Emmanuel Sanders, WR

SANDERS: JOE MAHONEY / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Seattle	Oakland	@ Baltimore	Kansas City	@ N.Y. Jets	L.A. Rams	@ Arizona	@ Kansas City
Sept. 9 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 16 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 1 / 8:15 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 18 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM

2017 RECORD   **OVERALL:** 5-11 **HOME:** 4-4
CONFERENCE: 4-8 **DIVISION:** 2-4

HEAD COACH   **VANCE JOSEPH** (SECOND YEAR, 5-11)
CAREER RECORD: 5-11

▸ **ONLINE:** www.denverbroncos.com
▸ **TWITTER:** @Broncos
▸ **TICKETS:** 720-258-3333
▸ **STADIUM:** Sports Authority Field at Mile High
▸ **CAPACITY:** 76,125
▸ **TURF:** Grass

Broncos making their Case for contention with addition of new quarterback Keenum

BY PETE WILLIAMS
Street & Smith's correspondent

Has it really only been two and a half years since Peyton Manning finished his career by leading the Denver Broncos to a win over Carolina in Super Bowl 50?

That seems like a generation ago. After a slip to 9-7 in 2016, the Broncos dropped to 5-11 last year, their worst finish since 2010. After starting last season 3-1, they finished 2-10, becoming the first team to suffer through a seven-game losing streak (later eight) within two seasons of winning a Super Bowl.

During Thanksgiving week alone, the Broncos lost to Cincinnati at home for their sixth straight loss (their first such streak since 1967), fired offensive coordinator Mike McCoy, released cornerback Lorenzo Doss for being late for a meeting, then held a practice that featured two fights. During the stretch, general manager John Elway called the team "a little bit soft."

Of course, Elway has only himself to blame for the roster. At one point late last season, the Broncos had only one of their eight drafted rookies contributing on game day: first-round pick and starting left tackle Garett Bolles. At quarterback, Elway had exhausted every option shy of

suiting himself up at age 57.

Still, with the AFC West looking a little bit soft in 2018, Denver could turn things around quickly. Case Keenum, unlikely savior of the 2017 Vikings, takes over behind center and the Broncos will attempt a quick reboot in Vance Joseph's second season as head coach.

OFFENSE

Well-traveled Bill Musgrave took over as offensive coordinator last November when McCoy was fired. In 2016, Musgrave led the Raiders' offense to sixth in total yards using some of the Chip Kelly playbook he employed at Philadelphia in 2014. Joseph is a proponent of run-first football and even Elway believes in a strong running game, having won two Super Bowls with Terrell Davis. Musgrave, who spent two seasons holding a clipboard as Elway's backup in Denver, figures to be of a similar mindset.

QUARTERBACKS: This position has been a revolving door since Manning rode into the sunset following Super Bowl 50. Elway has plugged in five quarterbacks via trade, the draft and free agency. Next up is Keenum, now on his fourth team in six seasons, who parlayed a run to the NFC title game with the Vikings into a $36 million deal with Denver. Elway believes Keenum's background as a lifelong underdog–lightly recruited out of high school, undrafted in 2012,

4 PREDICTED FINISH **AFC WEST**

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Case Keenum
	Paxton Lynch
FB	Andy Janovich
RB	Devontae Booker
	De'Angelo Henderson
LT	Garett Bolles
	Andreas Knappe
LG	Ron Leary
	Max Garcia
C	Matt Paradis
	J.J. Dielman
RG	Connor McGovern
	Billy Turner
RT	Jared Veldheer
	Menelik Watson
TE	Jeff Heuerman
	Jake Butt
WR	Demaryius Thomas
	Jordan Taylor
WR	Emmanuel Sanders
	Courtland Sutton

DEFENSE
DE	Derek Wolfe
	Zach Kerr
NT	Domata Peko
	Kyle Peko
DE	Adam Gotsis
	Shelby Harris
LB	Shane Ray
	Shaquil Barrett
LB	Brandon Marshall
	Jerrol Garcia-Williams
LB	Todd Davis
	Zaire Anderson
LB	Von Miller
	DeMarcus Walker
CB	Bradley Roby
	Tramaine Brock
CB	Chris Harris Jr.
	Isaac Yiadom
SS	Justin Simmons
	Jamal Carter
FS	Darian Stewart
	Su'a Cravens

SPECIALISTS
LS	Casey Kreiter
P	Marquette King
K	Brandon McManus
KR	Devontae Booker
PR	Isaiah McKenzie

BYE: WEEK 10 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Game time to be released by Week 8.

Week 9	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17
Houston	@ L.A. Chargers	Pittsburgh	@ Cincinnati	@ San Francisco	Cleveland	@ Oakland	L.A. Chargers
Nov. 4 / 4:05 PM	Nov. 18 / 4:05 PM	Nov. 25 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 15 / TBD*	Dec. 24 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 30 / 4:25 PM

DENVER **BRONCOS**

Von Miller, LB

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
51-29

CT	PL	SB		
13-3	12-4	12-4	9-7	5-11
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
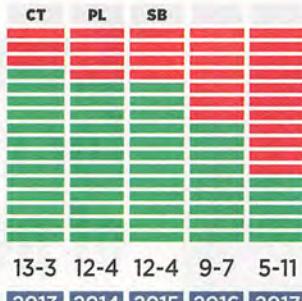
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs · **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

longtime backup and fill-in starter—should make the 30-year-old hungry to thrive in Denver. Keenum started eight games for Houston in 2013, which was Gary Kubiak's last year as head coach there. Kubiak won a Super Bowl with Denver and, after stepping down, has taken an expanded role in the Broncos' front office. So there's a mutual comfort level. If Keenum falters, there's always Paxton Lynch, a first-round pick in 2016 who enters training camp as the backup.

RUNNING BACKS: Denver's running game improved last year to rank 12th in the NFL (115.8 yards per game) after finishing 27th (92.8) in 2016. Still, it was inconsistent, which prompted changes. The Broncos parted ways with C.J. Anderson, who despite producing his first 1,000-yard rushing season for the

Broncos in 2017 with a career-high 1,007, never emerged as an elite rusher. His release saved the team $4.5 million in cap space and made way for third-year back Devontae Booker, who took over when Anderson was injured in 2016 and led the team in rushing. Last year, Booker, who dealt with a wrist injury early in the season, played an increasingly bigger role and was taking as many carries as Anderson by the end of the campaign. De'Angelo Henderson, a sixth-round pick in 2017, played little as a rookie but should see an expanded role.

RECEIVERS: Few teams can boast of a more accomplished receiver tandem than the Broncos with Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders. Unfortunately, both are on the wrong side of 30 and starting to show wear and

tear. Thomas, the five-time Pro Bowler, was hampered by hip pain in 2017 and limited to 83 catches, his lowest total since 2011. Sanders, who produced three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons (2014-16), dealt with a bad ankle and managed just 47 receptions. Joseph believes the two could return to form if other wideouts emerge to shoulder the load. Help could come at tight end, a perennial weak spot, where the Broncos should get a boost from Jake Butt, a fifth-round pick in 2017 who missed his rookie year while recovering from an ACL injury. Third-year wide receiver Jordan Taylor could play a bigger role, especially with the departure of Cody Latimer, who signed with the Giants. Second-round draft pick Courtland Sutton could see action early.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The line gave up

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Broncos

"Is there a tougher gig in the NFL than playing quarterback in Denver for John Elway? (Peyton) Manning could do it because of his resume, but it's tough for anyone else. I don't see it happening with (Case) Keenum, who seems like a stopgap until Elway figures out what he wants to do next. I'm not sold on this defense. There's talent, sure, and the D-line has come a long way, but you can hit your tight ends and guys out of the backfield all day against them. Until they figure that out, they're going to struggle. They need to get some receivers other than **(Demaryius) Thomas** and (Emmanuel) Sanders. Guys hit (age) 30 at that position and they can still contribute, but if they have to be the main guys still, they're going be done in a hurry. I don't see the young talent behind them."

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/11	W	24-21	Los Angeles Chargers
09/17	W	42-17	Dallas Cowboys
09/24	L	16-26	Buffalo Bills
10/01	W	16-10	Oakland Raiders
10/15	L	10-23	New York Giants
10/22	L	0-21	Los Angeles Chargers
10/30	L	19-29	Kansas City Chiefs
11/05	L	23-51	Philadelphia Eagles
11/12	L	16-41	New England Patriots
11/19	L	17-20	Cincinnati Bengals
11/26	L	14-21	Oakland Raiders
12/03	L	9-35	Miami Dolphins
12/10	W	23-0	New York Jets
12/14	W	25-13	Indianapolis Colts
12/24	L	11-27	Washington Redskins
12/31	L	24-27	Kansas City Chiefs

2017 RECORD: 5-11

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Anderson	245	1,007	4.1	40	3
Booker	79	299	3.8	26	1
Charles	69	296	4.3	19	1
Siemian	31	127	4.1	15	1
Osweiler	14	64	4.6	18t	1
Henderson	7	13	1.9	5	0
Janovich	6	12	2.0	4	1
Lynch	5	30	6.0	11	0
McKenzie	1	4	4.0	4	0
DENVER	457	1,852	4.1	40	8
OPPONENTS	428	1,430	3.3	47	9

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Thomas	83	949	11.4	40	5
Sanders	47	555	11.8	38	2
Booker	30	275	9.2	29	0
Fowler	29	350	12.1	29	3
Anderson	28	224	8.0	25	1
Charles	23	129	5.6	20	0
Latimer	19	287	15.1	32	2
Derby	19	224	11.8	29	2
Green	14	191	13.6	44	1
Taylor	13	142	10.9	30	0
Heuerman	9	142	15.8	54t	2
Traylor	8	100	12.5	34	0
Janovich	4	35	8.8	16	0
McKenzie	4	29	7.3	14	0
Henderson	2	36	18.0	29t	1
DENVER	332	3,668	11.0	54t	19
OPPONENTS	294	3,385	11.5	64t	29

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Siemian	349	206	2,285	12	14
Osweiler	172	96	1,088	5	5
Lynch	45	30	295	2	3
DENVER	566	332	3,333	19	22
OPPONENTS	491	294	3,210	29	10

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Booker	14	276	19.7	28	0
Latimer	8	190	23.8	36	0
Langley	6	183	30.5	61	0
McKenzie	3	50	16.7	21	0
Henderson	2	59	29.5	32	0
Janovich	1	10	10.0	10	0
DENVER	34	768	22.6	61	0
OPPONENTS	22	497	22.6	103t	1

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
McKenzie	21	183	8.7	44	0
Taylor	11	103	9.4	24	0
Sharp	5	55	11.0	16	0
Sanders	2	-2	-1.0	3	0
Fowler	1	6	6.0	6	0
Langley	1	6	6.0	6	0
DENVER	41	351	8.6	44	0
OPPONENTS	30	258	8.6	65t	1

SACKS	DENVER 33.0, OPPONENTS 52.0

Miller 10.0, S. Harris 5.5, Barrett 4.0, Marshall 3.0, Gotsis 2.0, Wolfe 2.0, Davis 1.0, Peko 1.0, Ray 1.0, Roby 1.0, Simmons 1.0, Walker 1.0, Kerr 0.5

⤷ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	324.1	17t
Rushing	115.8	12
Passing	208.3	20
Scoring	18.1	26
Punt returns	8.6	15
Kick returns	22.6	7
Red zone TD%	39.6	32
Total defense	290.0	3
Against rush	89.4	5
Against pass	200.6	4
Points allowed	23.9	22t
Interceptions	10	24t
Sacks	33.0	22
Turnover diff.	-17	31

the third-most sacks (52.0) in the league last year while producing the third-lowest rating for pass-blocking efficiency (75.1). But after a season of development and shakeup, it could be one of Denver's most improved units. Center Matt Paradis, the only Broncos player to participate in every snap the last three seasons, is the one constant. Veteran Jared Veldheer, acquired from Arizona in March, should provide leadership and stability at right tackle. Bolles, the 2017 first-round pick, had a shaky rookie season, especially in pass protection, but he figures to remain at left tackle rather than moving to the right side with the addition of Veldheer. Left guard Ron Leary, who was arguably the team's best lineman last year after arriving from Dallas, is effective against the pass and the run. Connor McGovern showed progress and versatility in his second season and enters training camp as the starting right guard.

DEFENSE

A college defensive back who coached the position at four college stops and for four NFL teams, including the Broncos, Joe Woods proved he could scheme against the run, too, in his first year as Denver's coordinator. The Broncos ranked among the NFL's top five against the pass and the run as well as total yards allowed. Still, the 3-4 set allowed too many touchdown receptions to running backs and Denver was one of three teams to surrender 1,000 yards receiving to tight ends.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Arguably the strongest unit on the team in 2017, it got better with the drafting of edge rusher Bradley Chubb with the fifth overall pick. The line was a big reason why the Broncos finished fifth in the NFL against the run, allowing just 89.4 yards per game; much improved from 2016, when they were 28th at 130.3 yards per game. Domata Peko, after 11 seasons in Cincinnati, showed he wasn't done and thrived at nose tackle. End Adam Gotsis, a 2016 second-round pick out of Georgia Tech who struggled as a rookie, showed progress in 2017, racking up 41 tackles and establishing himself as a building block for the defense. Shelby Harris, who had struggled to stick in the

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Denver head coach Vance Joseph

Joseph became a head coach after just one year as a coordinator, and his 2016 Miami defense wasn't especially good. Some thought he wouldn't get a second year in Denver after a tumultuous 2017. But Joseph is revered not just as a defensive whiz influenced by mentors Mike Nolan and Wade Phillips, but also for his leadership and vision. Offensively, he's on the conservative side, focusing on running the football, controlling the game and keeping third downs manageable for whoever is playing quarterback. Given Denver's QB situation in recent years, that's a wise approach.

DENVER **BRONCOS**

NFL, finished second on the team to Von Miller with 5.5 sacks. Derek Wolfe, a key part of the Super Bowl team in 2015, battled a neck problem and underwent surgery following the season. He's back at full strength, though the Broncos signed free agent Clinton McDonald from Tampa Bay for depth here.

LINEBACKERS: Miller's numbers might have been slightly down by his all-world standards in 2017, but the six-time Pro Bowler draws double teams and continues to rank among the best in the game. Shaquil Barrett, an undrafted free agent in 2014, is already an effective rotational pass rusher and his overall game has developed to the point where he'll command more playing time. Shane Ray enters the season as a starter opposite Miller, but his uneven play could make Barrett the starter. On the inside, the Broncos gave Todd Davis a three-year, $15 million extension this offseason and awarded Brandon Marshall a $5 million guaranteed salary. Neither was terribly effective last year, which is why opposing tight ends thrived against Denver. It's a position the team will look to upgrade, especially with the departure of backup

and key special-teamer Corey Nelson, who signed with the Eagles.

SECONDARY: By trading Aqib Talib to the Rams, the Broncos cleared $11 million in cap space and opened the way for Bradley Roby to become the No. 2 cornerback. Three-time Pro Bowler Chris Harris Jr., undrafted in 2011, has become one of the game's best corners and can even play safety if needed. Roby could face competition from Tramaine Brock, who was in Minnesota last season and previously played under Joseph when he was a defensive assistant for the 49ers, though Brock figures to play mostly in specialty packages. Pro Bowl free safety Darian Stewart has missed just one game over the past three seasons and strong safety Justin Simmons is one of the team's top emerging players. That makes the acquisition of safety Su'a Cravens from Washington something of a head-scratcher. Cravens could line up in something other than the base defense in a hybrid safety/linebacker role to cover tight ends and running backs.

SPECIAL TEAMS: This was a problem area in 2017, prompting Joseph to fire Brock Olivo (he was among six

IMPACT NEWCOMER

Case Keenum and Philadelphia's Nick Foles made 2017 the "Year of the Backup Quarterback." Unlike Foles, Keenum gets a shot to remain the leading man, albeit in a new city. Keenum's experience with the Houston Texans playing for Broncos front-office advisor Gary Kubiak should ease the transition. So should an improving offensive line. Whether Keenum thrives or becomes John Elway's latest headache, he'll have a huge impact in 2018.

assistants canned) and hire new special-teams coordinator Tom McMahon, who spent the last five seasons with the Colts. Special teams usually are a reflection of overall roster strength, something last year's 5-11 team didn't have. The Broncos dealt punter Riley Dixon to the Giants after signing Marquette King. King was third in the NFL in net punting last season (42.7-yard average) but was released by the Raiders in March amid rumblings that new head coach Jon Gruden was not a fan. Kicker Brandon McManus signed a contract extension and delivered a subpar season. The return game is in need of serious overhaul, perhaps augmented by rookies. Isaiah McKenzie and Booker struggled in the roles, though Taylor looked promising. The Broncos signed long snapper Casey Kreiter for a third season.

BOTTOM LINE

Since the Super Bowl 50 win, Elway's track record as general manager has been mixed and last year's result was historically bad for the franchise. Still, for a 5-11 group that looked like Team Turmoil at times last season, the 2018 Broncos are not in bad shape, even if they're thin at receiver. The defense is solid, as to be expected under Joseph. The offensive line is much improved and should Keenum be the quarterback he was in Minnesota last season, Denver could make a run at winning a lackluster AFC West.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...

... a Denver defender led the NFL in interceptions was 2006 when 12-time Pro Bowler **Champ Bailey** picked off a career-high 10 passes from his left cornerback position. Bailey made 52 interceptions in his 15-year pro career, with 34 of them coming in the 10 years he spent with the Broncos from 2004-13. Bailey, who returned four of his career picks for touchdowns, will be eligible for the Hall of Fame next year.

↘ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **OT** Jared Veldheer
  (trade, Arizona)
- **S** Su'a Cravens
  (trade, Washington)
- **CB** Tramaine Brock
  (free agent, Minnesota)
- **QB** Case Keenum
  (free agent, Minnesota)
- **P** Marquette King
  (free agent, Oakland)
- **DL** Clinton McDonald
  (free agent, Tampa Bay)

Su'a Cravens

THE DRAFT REPORT

2018 DRAFT GRADE
A

North Carolina State's **Bradley Chubb**, the fifth overall pick, gives the Broncos a much-needed edge rusher who should take some of the double teams off of Von Miller. Second-round wide receiver Courtland Sutton from SMU should contribute immediately, providing much-needed youth at a position that needed it. The Broncos entered the draft with just two running backs on the roster, which made third-round pick Royce Freeman (Oregon) a key selection. The 229-pound Freeman is the type of bigger back who thrives in Denver. Cornerback Isaac Yiadom from Boston College, another third-rounder, is a physical player who could see action in specialty packages.

↘ THE BRONCOS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	5	Bradley Chubb	DE/LB	6-4	269	22	N.C. State
2	40	Courtland Sutton	WR	6-3	218	22	SMU
3	71	Royce Freeman	RB	6-0	229	22	Oregon
3	99	Isaac Yiadom	CB	6-1	190	21	Boston College
4	106	Josey Jewell	LB	6-1	234	23	Iowa
4	113	DaeSean Hamilton	WR	6-1	203	23	Penn State
5	156	Troy Fumagalli	TE	6-5	247	23	Wisconsin
6	183	Sam Jones	G	6-5	305	22	Arizona State
6	217	Keishawn Bierria	LB	6-1	223	23	Washington
7	226	David Williams	RB	6-1	229	24	Arkansas

CRAVENS: DAVID ZALUBOWSKI / AP; CHUBB: DARRON CUMMINGS / AP; CHEERLEADERS: JACK DEMPSEY / AP

↘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Vance Joseph, **Head Coach;** Bill Musgrave, **Offensive Coordinator;** Joe Woods, **Defensive Coordinator;** Tom McMahon, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4	Keenum, Case	QB	6-1	215	30	6	Houston
6	Kelly, Chad	QB	6-2	224	24	1	Ole Miss
12	Lynch, Paxton	QB	6-7	244	24	3	Memphis

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
72	Bolles, Garett	T	6-5	300	26	2	Utah
64	Dielman, J.J.	C	6-5	300	24	1	Utah
76	Garcia, Max	G	6-4	309	26	4	Florida
73	Knappe, Andreas	T	6-8	325	27	1	Connecticut
79	Kouandjio, Cyrus	T	6-7	322	25	5	Alabama
65	Leary, Ron	G	6-3	320	29	7	Memphis
60	McGovern, Connor	G	6-4	306	25	3	Missouri
61	Paradis, Matt	C	6-3	300	28	4	Boise State
74	Poutasi, Jeremiah	G	6-5	330	24	3	Utah
77	Turner, Billy	G	6-5	310	26	5	North Dakota State
66	Veldheer, Jared	T	6-8	321	31	9	Hillsdale
75	Watson, Menelik	T	6-5	315	29	6	Florida State
68	Wilkinson, Elijah	T	6-6	329	23	2	Massachusetts

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
23	Booker, Devontae	RB	5-11	219	26	3	Utah
33	Henderson, De'Angelo	RB	5-7	208	25	2	Coastal Carolina
32	Janovich, Andy	FB	6-1	238	25	3	Nebraska

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
13	Bell, Kenny	WR	6-1	188	26	2	Nebraska
80	Butt, Jake	TE	6-6	250	23	1	Michigan
15	Cracraft, River	WR	6-0	198	23	1	Washington State
11	Henderson, Carlos	WR	5-11	191	23	2	Louisiana Tech
82	Heuerman, Jeff	TE	6-5	255	25	4	Ohio State
83	LaCosse, Matt	TE	6-6	255	25	3	Illinois
19	Leslie, Jordan	WR	6-1	205	26	1	BYU
84	McKenzie, Isaiah	WR	5-7	173	23	2	Georgia
89	Parker, Brian	TE	6-4	265	26	2	Albany
81	Patrick, Tim	WR	6-5	210	24	1	Utah
10	Sanders, Emmanuel	WR	5-11	180	31	9	SMU
87	Taylor, Jordan	WR	6-5	210	26	3	Rice
88	Thomas, Demaryius	WR	6-3	229	30	9	Georgia Tech
86	Traylor, Austin	TE	6-3	255	25	2	Wisconsin

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
91	Boyette, Paul	DT	6-1	310	24	1	Texas
99	Gotsis, Adam	DE	6-4	287	25	3	Georgia Tech
96	Harris, Shelby	DE	6-2	290	27	4	Illinois State
92	Kerr, Zach	DE	6-2	334	28	5	Delaware
98	McDonald, Clinton	DL	6-2	297	31	9	Memphis
94	Peko Sr., Domata	DT	6-3	325	33	13	Michigan State
90	Peko, Kyle	DT	6-1	305	25	2	Oregon State
57	Walker, DeMarcus	DE	6-4	280	23	2	Florida State
93	Williams, DeShawn	DT	6-1	292	25	2	Clemson
95	Wolfe, Derek	DE	6-5	285	28	7	Cincinnati

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
50	Anderson, Zaire	LB	5-11	220	26	3	Nebraska
48	Barrett, Shaquil	LB	6-2	250	25	5	Colorado State
51	Davis, Todd	LB	6-1	230	26	5	Sacramento State
41	Garcia-Williams, Jerrol	LB	6-2	235	24	2	Hawaii
43	Jones, Joseph	LB	6-0	240	24	2	Northwestern
59	Maponga, Stansly	LB	6-2	257	27	4	TCU
54	Marshall, Brandon	LB	6-1	250	29	7	Nevada
58	Miller, Von	LB	6-3	250	29	8	Texas A&M
53	Mount, Deiontrez	LB	6-5	253	25	3	Louisville
56	Ray, Shane	LB	6-3	245	25	4	Missouri
49	Rush, Marcus	LB	6-2	251	27	1	Michigan State
69	Thomas, Jhaustin	LB/DE	6-5	282	25	1	Iowa State

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
22	Brock, Tramaine	DB	5-10	188	30	9	Belhaven
20	Carter, Jamal	S	6-1	218	24	2	Miami (Fla.)
21	Cravens, Su'a	S	6-1	224	23	2	USC
25	Harris Jr., Chris	CB	5-10	199	29	7	Kansas
39	Hunter, Michael	CB	6-0	192	25	2	Oklahoma State
27	Langley, Brendan	CB	6-0	199	23	2	Lamar
30	Moore, Jordan	DB	6-3	225	24	1	UTSA
34	Parks, Will	S	6-1	194	24	3	Arizona
38	Rios, Marcus	CB	5-11	181	23	1	UCLA
29	Roby, Bradley	CB	5-11	194	26	5	Ohio State
31	Simmons, Justin	S	6-2	202	24	3	Boston College
28	Smith, C.J.	CB	5-11	189	25	2	North Dakota State
26	Stewart, Darian	S	5-11	214	30	9	South Carolina
35	Thomas, Dymonte	S	6-2	199	24	1	Michigan

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
3	Bertolet, Taylor	K	5-9	174	25	1	Texas A&M
1	King, Marquette	P	6-0	195	29	7	Fort Valley State
42	Kreiter, Casey	LS	6-1	250	28	4	Iowa
45	Kuntz, Christian	LS	6-1	227	24	1	Duquesne
8	McManus, Brandon	K	6-3	201	27	5	Temple

AFC WEST

SEARCH **STREET & SMITH'S** IN THE APP STORE **115**

NFC
OVERVIEW →

"The Last Time" for all NFC teams written by Will Long

Carson Wentz

Stefon Diggs
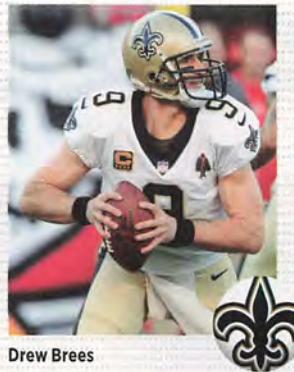
Drew Brees

Jared Goff

NFC
EAST

1 Philadelphia Eagles
If quarterback Carson Wentz can play at an MVP-level and the defense carries over its success from last season, there's no reason to think the Eagles can't be the first repeat Super Bowl champs since the 2004 Patriots.

2 Dallas Cowboys
Quarterback Dak Prescott, running back Ezekiel Elliott and the NFL's best offensive line could help Dallas get back to the postseason in a make-or-break year for coach Jason Garrett.

3 New York Giants
Coming off one of the worst seasons in franchise history, there's nowhere to go but up for the Giants, who could triple their win total from 2017 in Pat Shurmur's first year as coach if things fall into place.

4 Washington Redskins
It will take a massive year from quarterback Alex Smith and an improved running game for the Redskins to navigate a tough schedule, but anything other than a second consecutive losing record would be a surprise.

NFC
NORTH

1 Minnesota Vikings
The "all-in" approach the Vikings have taken this offseason is a no-holds-barred attempt to reach the Super Bowl with what they believe is a franchise quarterback and a defense that's loaded with elite, young and hungry talent.

2 Detroit Lions
The Lions won't be expected to win the NFC North, but if new coach Matt Patricia can help fix the running game, there's no reason the Lions shouldn't contend for a playoff spot.

3 Green Bay Packers
There isn't enough playmaking depth on offense or certainty on defense to win the NFC North, but the Packers seem to be better equipped at making a Super Bowl run next year while letting this season hinge on the contributions of the 2017 draft class.

4 Chicago Bears
While the NFL's worst passing offense will improve under new coach Matt Nagy, too many draft-day mistakes make it hard to sustain success due to a lack of quality depth.

NFC
SOUTH

1 New Orleans Saints
With a dramatic influx of talent from the 2017 draft to go with a veteran nucleus and the ageless Drew Brees at quarterback, the Saints are well-positioned for a title run in 2018.

2 Atlanta Falcons
The clock is ticking on the Falcons, who expect their seasoned defense to keep ascending while quarterback Matt Ryan, wide receiver Julio Jones and the rest of the offense returns to peak efficiency.

3 Carolina Panthers
The addition of new weapons and offensive coordinator Norv Turner will reenergize quarterback Cam Newton, and the Panthers should contend in the NFC South, although the Super Bowl window is closing on veterans Julius Peppers, Thomas Davis and Ryan Kalil.

4 Tampa Bay Buccaneers
General manager Jason Licht has assembled a roster that doesn't appear to have many holes, but it's up to coach Dirk Koetter to make it work and win games in arguably the NFL's toughest division.

NFC
WEST

1 Los Angeles Rams
The Rams need their offseason acquisitions to live up to the hype while quarterback Jared Goff and running back Todd Gurley continue to progress. If everything breaks right, Los Angeles should be a Super Bowl team.

2 San Francisco 49ers
Quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo's arrival accelerated San Francisco's rebuild, and if he stays healthy and the defense improves, the 49ers will be competing for a playoff spot when December rolls around.

3 Seattle Seahawks
Given the degree of turnover on the defense, expecting more than nine wins is unrealistic, but as long as quarterback Russell Wilson is healthy, the Seahawks will contend for a playoff spot.

4 Arizona Cardinals
New coach Steve Wilks faces great challenges and will have his work cut out for him in his first year with the Cardinals, as the offense has questions everywhere and a strong case can be made for finishing last in the NFC West.

PHILADELPHIA
EAGLES

Carson Wentz, QB

WENTZ: MICHAEL PEREZ / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Atlanta	@ Tampa Bay	Indianapolis	@ Tennessee	Minnesota	@ N.Y. Giants	Carolina	@ Jacksonville*
Sept. 6 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 11 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 9:30 AM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 13-3 **HOME:** 7-1
CONFERENCE: 10-2 **DIVISION:** 5-1

HEAD COACH **DOUG PEDERSON** (THIRD YEAR, 20-12)
CAREER RECORD: 20-12

▸ **ONLINE:** www.philadelphiaeagles.com
▸ **TWITTER:** @Eagles
▸ **TICKETS:** 267-570-4150
▸ **STADIUM:** Lincoln Financial Field
▸ **CAPACITY:** 69,176
▸ **TURF:** Grass

Eagles looking to be first back-to-back Super Bowl champions in 14 years

BY GEOFF MOSHER
CSNPhilly.com

Bloated quarterback salaries, roster attrition and wearing the target for 31 other teams has kept the NFL from having a repeat champion for nearly 15 years. Fortunately for the Philadelphia Eagles, two of those issues aren't problematic as they attempt to become the league's first back-to-back champions since 2004. With an elite quarterback still playing under his rookie deal and a balanced roster featuring veterans and dynamic, young talent on both sides, the Eagles have assembled a roster for 2018 that, on paper, appears more talent-laden than last year's Super Bowl-winning team.

Now, the Eagles must withstand the challenge of living in every other team's crosshairs on a week-to-week basis. It's hard to fathom, but the franchise that won its first Super Bowl in the game's 52-year history is better equipped to repeat than many of the modern champions that came before it.

PREDICTED FINISH NFC EAST 1

OFFENSE

Head coach Doug Pederson's spread offense taxed opponents by alternating tempos, aggressive playcalling and designing a balanced playbook not geared toward any one specific skill position. The Eagles didn't have a 1,000-yard rusher or 1,000-yard receiver in 2017 but still finished with the NFL's third-highest scoring offense. An effective, committee-based run game opened the middle for the intermediate passing game and created single opportunities on the boundary, which should be the same game plan for 2018. Pederson established himself as one of the league's most unpredictable and wildly aggressive coaches, with the itchiest of trigger fingers on fourth down.

QUARTERBACKS: When healthy, Carson Wentz is an elite quarterback who represents the Eagles' best chance to repeat as champs. In his second season, Wentz was on his way to an MVP until a torn ACL and PCL in Week 14 against the Rams ended his remarkable run and opened the door for backup Nick Foles to carry the baton en route to Super Bowl MVP. The surgery jeopardizes Wentz's chance to be ready for the start of 2018, which is why the Eagles didn't jump at opportunities to deal Foles away and gave Foles an extension loaded with incentives. Wentz suffered major injuries in each of his first two pro seasons and in his final year at North Dakota State. He's an accurate, strong-armed, electrifying, instinctive quarterback whose swashbuckling and

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Carson Wentz
	Nick Foles
RB	Jay Ajayi
	Corey Clement
LT	Jason Peters
	Halapoulivaati Vaitai
LG	Stefen Wisniewski
	Chance Warmack
C	Jason Kelce
	Jon Toth
RG	Brandon Brooks
	Isaac Seumalo
RT	Lane Johnson
	Taylor Hart
TE	Zach Ertz
	Dallas Goedert
WR	Alshon Jeffery
	Mack Hollins
WR	Mike Wallace
	Rashard Davis
WR	Nelson Agholor
	Shelton Gibson

DEFENSE

DE	Derek Barnett
	Chris Long
DT	Tim Jernigan
	Haloti Ngata
DT	Fletcher Cox
	Elijah Qualls
DE	Brandon Graham
	Michael Bennett
LB	Jordan Hicks
	Nathan Gerry
LB	Nigel Bradham
	Corey Nelson
CB	Sidney Jones
	Rasul Douglas
CB	Ronald Darby
	Randall Goforth
NB	Jalen Mills
	Malcolm Jenkins
SS	Malcolm Jenkins
	Tre Sullivan
FS	Rodney McLeod
	Chris Maragos

SPECIALISTS

LS	Rick Lovato
P	Cameron Johnston
K	Jake Elliott
KR	Wendell Smallwood
PR	Bryce Treggs

BYE: WEEK 9 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *****London**

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Dallas	**@ New Orleans**	**N.Y. Giants**	**Washington**	**@ Dallas**	**@ L.A. Rams**	**Houston**	**@ Washington**
Nov. 11 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 3 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 9 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 16 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

PHILADELPHIA **EAGLES**

Zach Ertz, TE

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
47-33

PL				SB
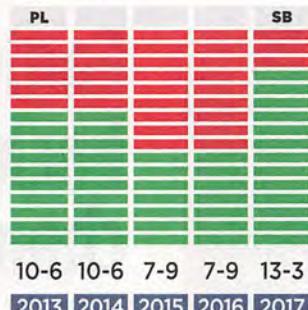
10-6	10-6	7-9	7-9	13-3
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

pocket Houdini acts draw comparisons to Aaron Rodgers. Nobody should suggest that he completely alter his approach to the position, but self-preservation should be a major focus of his offseason improvement.

RUNNING BACKS: This year's attack will look a little different but function much like last season's. Gone is leading rusher LeGarrette Blount, but Jay Ajayi–acquired from the Dolphins at last season's trade deadline–should fill Blount's role as lead back. Like Blount, Ajayi punishes the defense with hard-nosed running and quick jump-cuts, but Ajayi has more breakaway speed and better hands than Blount.

Second-year pro Corey Clement thrived as an undrafted rookie, emerging as a better-than-expected pass catcher who racked up 100 receiving yards and a touchdown in the Super Bowl. Clement's

role involved short yardage and third-down work, but he will look for expanded responsibility that includes more carries. Third-year pro Wendell Smallwood needs a major effort in camp to make the team. Donnel Pumphrey, a 176-pound San Diego State product who missed almost all of last season with a torn hamstring, must prove he can be productive against pro competition to keep his roster spot.

RECEIVERS: Pederson's offense is predicated on equal distribution and creation of mismatches over the middle. The offense intentionally lacks a No. 1 option and capitalizes on players who function well in space, which causes nightmares for opposing defensive coordinators looking to shut down any one particular player. Wentz feasts off interior weapons such as Pro Bowl tight end Zach Ertz and slot receiver Nelson Agholor. He also showed major improvement last year

on his deep ball thanks to the additions of Alshon Jeffery and Torrey Smith.

The Eagles dealt Smith to the Panthers this offseason and signed free agent Mike Wallace, who most consider an upgrade. Agholor's emergence after two dismal seasons–768 receiving yards, eight TDs, 12.4 yards per catch–brought some needed explosion to an offense that lacked any the prior year and justified the 20th overall draft pick the team used on him in 2015. Jeffery's numbers were below his career average, but his 6-3 frame, uncanny vertical and reliable hands helped him join Ertz as two major red-zone weapons for the NFL's top-ranked red-zone offense. The Eagles saved cash by cutting 11-year vet Brent Celek, leaving them without their lone blocking tight end and major piece of their rushing attack. Rookie second-round pick Dallas Goedert is considered an Ertz clone with

ERTZ: MATT YORK / AP, WALLACE: WINSLOW TOWNSON / AP

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Eagles

"To be honest, they could be even better. They're getting (Jordan) Hicks back, they upgraded with **(Mike) Wallace** over Torrey (Smith). They can easily replace (LeGarrette) Blount. He was nice for them, but they can replace that by committee. If Jason Peters can come back at some level, even playing guard, I think they're poised to be right back in the hunt. It's hard to say they're going to be any different

from last year. I think they're stacked, to be honest. They look better on paper. (Michael) Bennett, holy (expletive)—he's a one-year rental but he's a game-wrecker when he's right. The distribution on offense was excellent. They have a depth of talent to where they don't have a superstar on offense outside of the quarterback, but they have a number of guys who on any given week can be a difficult matchup for you. Doug (Pederson) is so good at keeping you off balance because his unpredictability is predictable."

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	30-17	Washington Redskins
09/17	L	20-27	Kansas City Chiefs
09/24	W	27-24	New York Giants
10/01	W	26-24	Los Angeles Chargers
10/08	W	34-7	Arizona Cardinals
10/12	W	28-23	Carolina Panthers
10/23	W	34-24	Washington Redskins
10/29	W	33-10	San Francisco 49ers
11/05	W	51-23	Denver Broncos
11/19	W	37-9	Dallas Cowboys
11/26	W	31-3	Chicago Bears
12/03	L	10-24	Seattle Seahawks
12/10	W	43-35	Los Angeles Rams
12/17	W	34-29	New York Giants
12/25	W	19-10	Oakland Raiders
12/31	L	0-6	Dallas Cowboys

2017 RECORD: 13-3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Blount	173	766	4.4	68	2
Clement	74	321	4.3	28	4
Ajayi	70	408	5.8	71	1
Wentz	64	299	4.7	24	0
Smallwood	47	174	3.7	26	1
Barner	16	57	3.6	18	1
Sproles	15	61	4.1	12	0
Foles	11	3	0.3	9	0
Sudfeld	1	22	22.0	22	0
Agholor	1	7	7.0	7	0
Smith	1	-3	-3.0	-3	0
PHILADELPHIA	473	2,115	4.5	71	9
OPPONENTS	337	1,267	3.8	53t	7

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Ertz	74	824	11.1	53	8
Agholor	62	768	12.4	72t	8
Jeffery	57	789	13.8	53t	9
Smith	36	430	11.9	59t	2
Burton	23	248	10.8	27t	5
Hollins	16	226	14.1	64t	1
Celek	13	130	10.0	28	1
Smallwood	13	103	7.9	24	0
Clement	10	123	12.3	28	2
Ajayi	10	91	9.1	32	1
Blount	8	50	6.3	20	1
Sproles	7	73	10.4	16	0
Barner	5	56	11.2	22	0
Johnson	5	45	9.0	16	0
Gibson	2	11	5.5	6	0
PHILADELPHIA	341	3,967	11.6	72t	38
OPPONENTS	363	3,883	10.7	77t	24

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Wentz	440	265	3,296	33	7
Foles	101	57	537	5	2
Sudfeld	23	19	134	0	0
PHILADELPHIA	564	341	3,737	38	9
OPPONENTS	601	363	3,637	24	19

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Barner	10	194	19.4	27	0
Smallwood	4	93	23.3	28	0
Clement	2	49	24.5	35	0
Celek	2	18	9.0	10	0
PHILADELPHIA	18	354	19.7	35	0
OPPONENTS	47	1,015	21.6	61	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Barner	27	240	8.9	76	0
Sproles	1	10	10.0	10	0
Smith	1	9	9.0	9	0
PHILADELPHIA	29	259	8.9	76	0
OPPONENTS	25	171	6.8	44	0

SACKS	PHILADELPHIA 38.0, OPPONENTS 36.0

B. Graham 9.5, Cox 5.5, Barnett 5.0, Long 5.0, Curry 3.0, Jernigan 2.5, Kendricks 2.0, Allen 1.0, Bradham 1.0, Jenkins 1.0, Means 1.0, Robinson 1.0, Hamilton 0.5

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	365.8	7
Rushing	132.2	3
Passing	233.6	13
Scoring	28.6	3
Punt returns	8.9	11
Kick returns	19.7	27
Red zone TD%	64.1	2
Total defense	306.5	4
Against rush	79.2	1
Against pass	227.3	17
Points allowed	18.4	4
Interceptions	19	4t
Sacks	38.0	15t
Turnover diff.	+11	4

tremendous athleticism and some blocking acumen.

OFFENSIVE LINE: After winning the Super Bowl with backups starting at left tackle and left guard, the Eagles are poised to return stronger and deeper. Jason Peters, a nine-time Pro Bowl left tackle, is expected to return from ACL surgery. He could feasibly move to left guard if he's not the same athlete he was pre-surgery. Moving Peters would precipitate a move from right to left for Lane Johnson, who made the Pro Bowl last season and should make several more before his career is done. Johnson owned many of the NFL's top pass rushers in 2017, which may prompt coaches to keep him at right tackle. Once considered on his way out sooner than later, center Jason Kelce's bounce-back season should keep him in place for another year alongside Pro Bowl right guard Brandon Brooks. It's possible that two Super Bowl starters—left guard Stefen Wisniewksi and left tackle Halapoulivaati Vaitai—will come off the bench, giving the team exceptional depth here.

DEFENSE

Coordinator Jim Schwartz's system is predicated on generating a four-man rush, which explains the Eagles' priority of stockpiling quick-burst linemen who seamlessly blend with the team's one-gap concept and excel in taking aim at quarterbacks. Schwartz relies heavily on frequent line rotations to keep legs fresh and energized. Although he prefers a basic rush-four, drop-seven scheme, Schwartz doesn't shy away from harassing passers with an occasional delayed blitz or zero blitz at opportune times.

DEFENSIVE LINE: This group was—and will be—the bread and butter of Schwartz's defensive game plan, starting with three-time Pro Bowl tackle Fletcher Cox, who has 21.5 sacks over the last three years. The team lost starting end Vinny Curry as a cap casualty and rotational run-stuffer Beau Allen to free agency—both to Tampa Bay—but traded for three-time Pro Bowl end Michael Bennett and signed veteran run-stopper Haloti Ngata. By any metric, that's an upgrade. Bennett, who can play inside in nickel, joins a top-tier pass rush that includes Brandon Graham and second-year pro Derek Barnett, last year's 14th overall draft pick who showed tremendous burst as a rookie. The 32-year-old Bennett, who played 931 snaps in 2017,

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Philadelphia head coach Doug Pederson

If nothing else, Pederson is the NFL's most aggressive head coach. No other coach has called more offensive plays on fourth down over the past two seasons than Pederson, and his aggression has served the franchise well. Not only are the Eagles one of the best teams at converting in short-yardage and goal-line situations, they've also led the NFL in time of possession in each of Pederson's first two seasons, which has also benefited the defense. Pederson has proven to take far more risks and lean heavier on analytics than his mentor, former Eagles and current Chiefs head coach Andy Reid, which explains why Reid took the Eagles to the championship doorstep several times in 14 years but Pederson broke down the door to get inside.

PHILADELPHIA **EAGLES**

should benefit from a reduced workload. No Eagles lineman played more than 670 snaps last year. Chris Long, who ranked second in the NFL in strip-sacks last year, returns for even more depth. Good luck finding another line with more talent and depth than this one.

LINEBACKERS: Jordan Hicks and Nigel Bradham are the perfect tandem to play behind the wide-nine. When healthy, Hicks doesn't leave the field and controls the interior defense. He's not especially big or imposing but plays with great instincts against the run and knows how to navigate around offensive linemen to ballcarriers. He's extremely fast and instinctive in coverage. The team kept Bradham from leaving via free agency by signing him to a long-term deal. He's another sound tackler who excels against the run and is adequate enough in coverage when the pass rush hits home.

Free-agent signee Corey Nelson will play weakside, a position that typically involves 25 percent of the snaps. Depth at this position is problematic, but no less than last season and the Eagles still managed to win the Super Bowl. Second-year pro Nathan Gerry, a safety convert, will compete with third-year man Joe Walker for the top reserve spot. Both should add to special teams.

SECONDARY: Sidney Jones, a projected top-15 pick who tumbled into the second round after rupturing his Achilles at his pro day, recovered in time to play in the season finale. Barring major struggles, Jones will start outside and create competition between incumbents Ronald Darby and Jalen Mills for the other outside spot. Darby, a second-round pick who came over last summer in a trade, has the speed for the perimeter but his 5-11 frame can be vulnerable against the NFL's growing number of towering wideouts. Mills has practiced in the slot but it's not a natural position. The team will miss slot corner Patrick Robinson, who parlayed his comeback 2017 season into a big contract with the Saints.

Big, physical, second-year corner Rasul Douglas, who started his college career at safety, is primed to replace Corey Graham as the dime safety or in the "big nickel" package. Douglas can play the slot against tight ends or patrol center field. He has nice range and playmaking skills, as evidenced by his two rookie interceptions. This could be the last go-round for safeties Malcolm Jenkins and Rodney McLeod, each of whom see major cap increases in 2018 and beyond. Jenkins, who started his career at corner and often matches against slot receivers and "move" tight ends, could be the full-time answer in the slot to replace Robinson.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Rookie kicker Jake
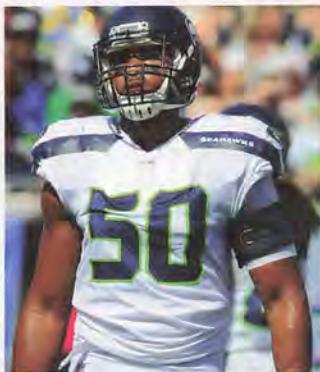
A less-is-more concept helped Eagles pass rushers flourish on limited snaps and frequent rotations in 2017. This should help newcomer **Michael Bennett**, who played 931 snaps last season but probably won't play much more than half that number with the Eagles. In his age-33 season, Bennett should benefit from the reduced workload and fresh legs to be a consistent presence in the pass rush.

Elliott replaced injured Caleb Sturgis in Week Two and swiped the job away with a surreal season that included a game-winning 61-yard field goal in his second career game. Elliott set multiple team and league records last year. If he can avoid the second-year jinx that curtailed the careers of previous Eagles kickers Alex Henery and Cody Parkey, Elliott can stick around for a long time. Backup safety Chris Maragos, ace of the team's return and coverage units, is attempting his return from major knee surgery. The Eagles should also be concerned about the loss of backup tight end Trey Burton, another weapon who keyed one of the NFL's best overall special-teams units.

BOTTOM LINE

The salary cap almost ensures that Super Bowl champions struggle to return their core the following season, but the Eagles are the rare exception. Nineteen of 22 starters on offense and defense will be back, making their quest to be the first repeat champion since the 2004 New England Patriots as viable as any other team's attempt. Helping their cause is Wentz's insatiable desire to hoist the Lombardi Trophy after watching his backup, Foles, handle the hardware after becoming the first quarterback to deliver a Super Bowl title to Philadelphia. If Wentz again plays at an MVP level, and if the Eagles' defense carries over its success from last season, there's no reason for Philadelphia to be absent from Super Bowl conversations.

2018 TEAM GRADE: A
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Eagles led the NFL in scoring defense was 1981 when they allowed just 13.8 points per game. Led by nose tackle Charlie Johnson, cornerback Roynell Young and linebackers Frank LeMaster and Jerry Robinson—all of whom made the Pro Bowl that season—Philadelphia finished 10-6 and made the playoffs for the fourth consecutive season. Coach Dick Vermeil's team lost at home to the Giants in the wild-card game, however, 27-21.

⟱ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **DE** Michael Bennett (trade, Seattle)
- **TE** Richard Rodgers (free agent, Green Bay)
- **LB** Paul Worrilow (free agent, Detroit)
- **WR** Mike Wallace (free agent, Baltimore)
- **LB** Corey Nelson (free agent, Denver)
- **DT** Haloti Ngata (free agent, Detroit)

NFL DRAFT

Haloti Ngata

THE DRAFT REPORT

Second-round tight end **Dallas Goedert** should look familiar. The 6-5, 260-pound South Dakota State product has been referred to as a hybrid of Zach Ertz and Chiefs Pro Bowl tight end Travis Kelce. His highlight reel is rife with acrobatic, one-handed catches. Goedert isn't an esteemed blocker but can cause matchup nightmares in two-tight end formations with Ertz. Fourth-round cornerback Avonte Maddox can be groomed for the slot that Patrick Robinson flourished in last season. Maddox, out of Pitt, ran a 4.39 at the Combine and posted the best 60-yard shuttle time, but his confidence and physicality is what most appealed to the Eagles' defensive staff. Philadelphia had only two picks in the top 125.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
C+

⟱ THE EAGLES' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
2	49	Dallas Goedert	TE	6-5	260	23	South Dakota State
4	125	Avonte Maddox	CB	5-9	180	22	Pittsburgh
4	130	Josh Sweat	DE	6-5	250	21	Florida State
6	206	Matt Pryor	T	6-7	338	23	TCU
7	233	Jordan Mailata	T	6-8	346	20	None

⟱ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Doug Pederson, **Head Coach;** Mike Groh, **Offensive Coordinator;** Jim Schwartz, **Defensive Coordinator;** Dave Fipp, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9 Foles, Nick	QB	6-6	243	29	7	Arizona
7 Sudfeld, Nate	QB	6-6	227	24	3	Indiana
11 Wentz, Carson	QB	6-5	237	25	3	North Dakota State

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
79 Brooks, Brandon	G	6-5	335	29	7	Miami (Ohio)
78 Greene, Darrell	G	6-3	321	25	1	San Diego State
76 Hart, Taylor	T	6-6	305	27	4	Oregon
65 Johnson, Lane	T	6-6	317	28	6	Oklahoma
62 Kelce, Jason	C	6-3	295	30	8	Cincinnati
71 Peters, Jason	T	6-4	328	36	15	Arkansas
73 Seumalo, Isaac	G	6-4	303	24	3	Oregon State
64 Toth, Jon	C	6-5	310	24	1	Kentucky
72 Vaitai, Halapoulivaati	T	6-6	320	25	3	TCU
67 Warmack, Chance	G	6-2	323	26	6	Alabama
61 Wisniewski, Stefen	C/G	6-3	305	29	8	Penn State

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
36 Ajayi, Jay	RB	6-0	223	25	4	Boise State
30 Clement, Corey	RB	5-10	220	23	2	Wisconsin
34 Pumphrey, Donnel	RB	5-9	176	23	2	San Diego State
28 Smallwood, Wendell	RB	5-10	208	24	3	West Virginia
43 Sproles, Darren	RB	5-6	190	35	14	Kansas State

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
13 Agholor, Nelson	WR	6-0	198	25	4	USC
85 Brown, Billy	TE	6-4	255	25	1	Shepherd
19 Davis, Rashard	WR	5-7	175	22	1	James Madison
86 Ertz, Zach	TE	6-5	250	27	6	Stanford
18 Gibson, Shelton	WR	5-11	191	23	2	West Virginia
10 Hollins, Mack	WR	6-4	221	24	2	North Carolina
17 Jeffery, Alshon	WR	6-3	218	28	7	South Carolina
83 Perkins, Joshua	TE	6-3	223	25	2	Washington
82 Rodgers, Richard	TE	6-4	257	26	5	California
16 Treggs, Bryce	WR	6-0	185	24	3	California
14 Wallace, Mike	WR	6-0	200	32	10	Ole Miss
89 Ward, Greg	WR	5-11	186	23	1	Houston
84 Williams, Dom	WR	6-2	200	25	2	Washington State
81 Wilson, Marquess	WR	6-4	206	25	5	Washington State
80 Zaruba, Adam	TE	6-5	265	27	1	Simon Fraser

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
96 Barnett, Derek	DE	6-3	259	22	2	Tennessee
77 Bennett, Michael	DE	6-4	274	32	10	Texas A&M
91 Cox, Fletcher	DT	6-4	310	27	7	Mississippi State
74 Craig, Winston	DT	6-4	290	23	1	Richmond
55 Graham, Brandon	DE	6-2	265	30	9	Michigan
93 Jernigan, Tim	DT	6-2	295	25	5	Florida State
56 Long, Chris	DE	6-3	270	33	11	Virginia
51 Means, Steven	DE	6-3	263	27	4	Buffalo
94 Ngata, Haloti	DT	6-4	340	34	13	Oregon
98 Qualls, Elijah	DT	6-1	321	23	2	Washington
90 Shittu, Aziz	DT	6-2	288	24	2	Stanford
97 Vaeao, Destiny	DT	6-4	299	24	3	Washington State

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
53 Bradham, Nigel	LB	6-2	241	29	7	Florida State
47 Gerry, Nathan	LB	6-2	218	23	2	Nebraska
54 Grugier-Hill, Kamu	LB	6-2	220	24	3	Eastern Illinois
58 Hicks, Jordan	LB	6-1	236	26	4	Texas
95 Kendricks, Mychal	LB	6-0	240	27	7	California
52 Nelson, Corey	LB	6-1	226	26	5	Oklahoma
59 Walker, Joe	LB	6-2	236	25	3	Oregon
50 Worrilow, Paul	LB	6-0	230	28	6	Delaware

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
33 Bausby, De'Vante	CB	6-2	190	25	2	Pittsburg State
38 Bouka, Elie	CB	6-1	205	26	1	Calgary (Canada)
41 Darby, Ronald	CB	5-11	193	24	4	Florida State
32 Douglas, Rasul	CB	6-2	209	23	2	West Virginia
36 Goforth, Randall	CB	5-10	190	24	2	UCLA
27 Jenkins, Malcolm	S	6-0	204	30	10	Ohio State
22 Jones, Sidney	CB	6-0	181	22	1	Washington
35 Killings, D.J.	CB	6-0	185	23	1	UCF
42 Maragos, Chris	S	5-10	200	31	9	Wisconsin
23 McLeod, Rodney	S	5-10	195	28	7	Virginia
31 Mills, Jalen	CB	6-0	191	24	3	LSU
49 Sullivan, Tre	S	6-0	200	23	1	Shepherd

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4 Elliott, Jake	K	5-9	167	23	2	Memphis
1 Johnston, Cameron	P	5-11	194	26	1	Ohio State
45 Lovato, Rick	LS	6-2	249	26	2	Old Dominion

DALLAS
COWBOYS

Ezekiel Elliott, RB

ELLIOTT: BRAD PENNER / AP

⬊ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 9
@ Carolina	N.Y. Giants	@ Seattle	Detroit	@ Houston	Jacksonville	@ Washington	Tennessee
Sept. 9 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 16 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 23 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 14 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 21 / 4:25 PM	Nov. 5 / 8:15 PM

2017 RECORD   **OVERALL:** 9-7 **HOME:** 3-5
CONFERENCE: 7-5 **DIVISION:** 5-1

HEAD COACH   **JASON GARRETT** (NINTH YEAR, 67-53)
CAREER RECORD: 67-53

▶ **ONLINE:** www.dallascowboys.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @dallascowboys
▶ **TICKETS:** 817-892-4400
▶ **STADIUM:** AT&T Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 80,000
▶ **TURF:** Matrix RealGrass Artificial Turf

Cowboys finding that trying to contend during a period of transition is no easy task

BY CHAREAN WILLIAMS
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

A picture recently making the rounds on social media shows Jason Witten, Tony Romo, Dez Bryant and DeMarco Murray sitting in the locker room, all smiles after a Dallas victory. It seems like only yesterday the four played for the Cowboys.

Murray left as a free agent in 2015. Romo retired in 2017. The last two men standing from that photo—Bryant and Witten—moved on this offseason. The Cowboys released Bryant in April and, only two weeks later, Witten retired.

The Cowboys have remade their roster the past two offseasons, with Dak Prescott and Ezekiel Elliott now the faces of the franchise.

Despite losing Bryant, Witten and linebacker Anthony Hitchens, owner Jerry Jones hasn't lost faith. He still believes the Cowboys are a Super Bowl contender.

"I think we've got more clarity as to what our team needs to look like with the personnel that we've got," Jones says. "I think that gives you a chance to have a better team."

OFFENSE

After cutting Romo a year ago, the Cowboys began trying to make their offense "Dak-friendly." They went into this offseason with a renewed commitment to that goal. They tweaked their playbook. They hired a new quarterbacks coach. They released Bryant, who didn't fit what Prescott does. They signed receivers Deonte Thompson and Allen Hurns, who do. The offense, though, still runs through Elliott and behind an offensive line that gave the Cowboys their identity in 2016 when they won an NFC-best 13 games. Dallas will try to return to smash-mouth football by keeping Elliott out of trouble and on the field and by getting the offensive line back to playing like it's the best in the league.

QUARTERBACKS: Is Prescott a one-year wonder? Is he a franchise quarterback? A fourth-round choice in 2016, he left the Cowboys with questions after a sophomore slump. He won fewer games (9 in 2017, 13 in 2016), threw fewer touchdowns (22 in 2017, 23 in 2016), threw for fewer yards (3,324 in 2017, 3,667 in 2016) and produced a lower passer rating (86.6 in 2017, 104.9 in 2016). Prescott is still not comfortable throwing the ball down the field, which is why he and Bryant never developed a rapport. Prescott will try to regain his connection with Cole Beasley, who saw defensive coordinators take him away in 2017 after he led the Cowboys in catches a year earlier. Prescott is excited about his new quarterbacks coach, Kellen Moore,

2 PREDICTED FINISH NFC EAST

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Dak Prescott
	Cooper Rush
RB	Ezekiel Elliott
	Rod Smith
LT	Tyron Smith
	Cameron Fleming
LG	Connor Williams
	Marcus Martin
C	Travis Frederick
	Joe Looney
RG	Zack Martin
	Joe Looney
RT	La'el Collins
	Cameron Fleming
TE	Geoff Swaim
	Rico Gathers
WR	Allen Hurns
	Deonte Thompson
WR	Cole Beasley
	Tavon Austin
WR	Terrance Williams
	Michael Gallup

DEFENSE

DE	Tyrone Crawford
	Kony Ealy
DT	Maliek Collins
	Jihad Ward
DT	David Irving
	Brian Price
DE	Demarcus Lawrence
	Randy Gregory
SLB	Jaylon Smith
	Damien Wilson
MLB	Leighton Vander Esch
	Jaylon Smith
WLB	Sean Lee
	Justin March-Lillard
CB	Jourdan Lewis
	Byron Jones
CB	Chidobe Awuzie
	Anthony Brown
SS	Jeff Heath
	Kavon Frazier
FS	Xavier Woods
	Byron Jones

SPECIALISTS

LS	L.P. Ladouceur
P	Chris Jones
K	Dan Bailey
KR	Tavon Austin
PR	Tavon Austin

BYE: WEEK 8   Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
@ Philadelphia	@ Atlanta	Washington	New Orleans	Philadelphia	@ Indianapolis	Tampa Bay	@ N.Y. Giants
Nov. 11 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 22 / 4:30 PM	Nov. 29 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 9 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

DALLAS **COWBOYS**

Cole Beasley, WR

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
46-34

		PL		PL	
8-8	12-4	4-12	13-3	9-7
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
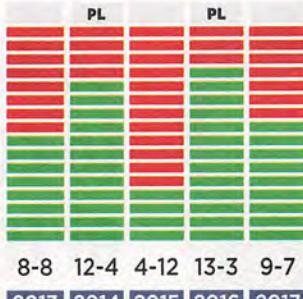
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

who went into last year's training camp as Prescott's backup. Cooper Rush, an undrafted rookie free agent in 2017, will have a challenger for the No. 2 job in fifth-round draft pick Mike White from Western Kentucky.

RUNNING BACKS: Elliott led the league in rushing as a rookie with 1,631 yards, and he entered last year as an MVP candidate. But a suspension loomed over his head to start the season, and a long legal battle ensued. Elliott ultimately served the six-game suspension, but the eight games he played before that were affected by the threat of the suspension. The Cowboys went 3-3 without him. He gained 983 yards in the 10 games he did play. Elliott should again join the MVP conversation as he is expected to

play a big part in the team's offense. He'll likely get somewhere close to the 354 touches he had and 716 snaps he played in 2016. That leaves a handful of snaps and touches for Rod Smith, who beat out Darren McFadden and Alfred Morris for the backup job last season. But the Cowboys also want to get trade acquisition Tavon Austin, acquired from the Rams, involved as their "web" back. They will use him as a receiver out of the backfield and in the slot. The Cowboys expect to use a fullback more than last year, when they played one only 12 percent of the time. That's why they traded with Oakland for fullback Jamize Olawale.

RECEIVERS: Bryant and Witten combined for 132 catches, 1,398 yards

and 11 touchdowns in 2017. That was 42.7 percent of the team's completions, 42 percent of the yards and 50 percent of the passing touchdowns. How do the Cowboys replace that? They signed free agents Thompson and Hurns, but neither is a No. 1 receiver. Their third-round draft choice, Colorado State receiver Michael Gallup, will need time to develop. Although the Cowboys don't have a feature receiver on their roster, they might not need one. Prescott prefers to spread the ball around and throw underneath, so Thompson, Hurns, Gallup, Beasley and Terrance Williams might prove good enough as a group to make up for the loss of Bryant. But for the first time since 2002, the year before they drafted him, the Cowboys won't have

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Cowboys

"**Dak Prescott** needs to improve his anticipation. He needs to get rid of the ball before receivers are out of their breaks and seeing that window before it comes open. Between college and NFL, there's such a difference with passing windows. In college, they're a lot bigger. In the NFL, you can't wait for them bigger. Once you see that little glimmer, you've got to fire it. Part of that is the receivers. Dez Bryant didn't do him any favors a lot of time with the timing of his routes, and his performance at the top of routes. He needs his receivers to step up as well.

"I think you're going to see some schematic changes with their offense. It will be interesting

to see how the offense evolves without Bryant and Jason Witten. They have no No. 1 receiver, no true X. Do they go to more four-receiver sets?

Their running game will still be their bread and butter. They drafted Dalton Schultz. Is that your new tight end? Is he going to be able to hold up in the trenches as a guy that's going to be an in-line blocker pretty quickly? There's a lot about their offense that's unknown right now. I'm not even sure they know.

"On defense, what are they going to do at free safety? Is it Xavier Woods? He seems like the only free safety on their roster. I think they did a nice job at upgrading the front seven, but they look like they still have a huge hole at free safety.

"Dan Bailey did not have a good year last year, and they look like they're crossing their fingers and hoping he will be better this season, and hope isn't a good strategy. He better be 100 percent or they're in trouble."

⟋ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	19-3	New York Giants
09/17	L	17-42	Denver Broncos
09/25	W	28-17	Arizona Cardinals
10/01	L	30-35	Los Angeles Rams
10/08	L	31-35	Green Bay Packers
10/22	W	40-10	San Francisco 49ers
10/29	W	33-19	Washington Redskins
11/05	W	28-17	Kansas City Chiefs
11/12	L	7-27	Atlanta Falcons
11/19	L	9-37	Philadelphia Eagles
11/23	L	6-28	Los Angeles Chargers
11/30	W	38-14	Washington Redskins
12/10	W	30-10	New York Giants
12/17	W	20-17	Oakland Raiders
12/24	L	12-21	Seattle Seahawks
12/31	W	6-0	Philadelphia Eagles

2017 RECORD: 9-7

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Elliott	242	983	4.1	30	7
Morris	115	547	4.8	70	1
Prescott	57	357	6.3	21	6
R. Smith	55	232	4.2	45	4
Switzer	4	5	1.3	3	0
Williams	2	15	7.5	9	0
Rush	2	13	6.5	15	0
Jones	1	24	24.0	24	0
McFadden	1	-2	-2.0	-2	0
Bryant	1	-4	-4.0	-4	0
DALLAS	480	2,170	4.5	70	18
OPPONENTS	403	1,664	4.1	71	7

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Bryant	69	838	12.1	50t	6
Witten	63	560	8.9	28t	5
Williams	53	568	10.7	56	0
Beasley	36	314	8.7	54	4
Elliott	26	269	10.3	72t	2
R. Smith	19	202	10.6	81t	1
Butler	15	317	21.1	53	3
Morris	7	45	6.4	13	0
Switzer	6	41	6.8	12	0
K. Smith	5	26	5.2	12	0
Hanna	4	88	22.0	31	1
N. Brown	4	33	8.3	14	0
Swaim	2	25	12.5	18	0
DALLAS	309	3,326	10.8	81t	22
OPPONENTS	371	3,746	10.1	56t	28

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Prescott	490	308	3,324	22	13
Rush	3	1	2	0	0
DALLAS	493	309	3,341	22	13
OPPONENTS	559	371	3,425	28	10

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Switzer	24	600	25.0	61	0
R. Smith	1	20	20.0	20	0
DALLAS	25	620	24.8	61	0
OPPONENTS	35	759	21.7	66	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Switzer	29	256	8.8	83t	1
Beasley	2	19	9.5	15	0
DALLAS	31	275	8.9	83t	1
OPPONENTS	18	75	4.2	20	0

SACKS	DALLAS 38.0, OPPONENTS 32.0

Lawrence 14.5, Irving 7.0, Crawford 4.0, Charlton 3.0, Collins 2.5, A. Brown 1.0, D. Jones 1.0, Mayowa 1.0, Ross 1.0, J. Smith 1.0, Tapper 1.0, Wilson 1.0.

⟋ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	341.9	14
Rushing	135.6	2
Passing	208.8	26
Scoring	22.1	15
Punt returns	8.9	13
Kick returns	24.8	3
Red zone TD%	59.6	7
Total defense	318.1	8
Against rush	104.0	8
Against pass	214.1	11
Points allowed	20.8	13t
Interceptions	10	24t
Sacks	38.0	15t
Turnover diff.	-1	16t

Witten as their starting tight end. Witten made 1,152 catches for 12,448 yards and 68 touchdowns during his career. Rico Gathers, Geoff Swaim and Blake Jarwin have combined to make nine catches for 94 yards and no touchdowns in 29 career games. The Cowboys will miss Witten's leadership even more than his production on the field, which had slipped in recent years.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The Cowboys returned all three of their All-Pro offensive linemen last season, but the other two members of the unit deserved more credit. Dallas wasn't the same without right tackle Doug Free, who retired, and left guard Ron Leary, who left in free agency. Jonathan Cooper struggled at left guard, while La'el Collins spent all season trying to adjust to the move from left guard to right tackle. The Cowboys addressed their line in free agency, signing guard Marcus Martin and tackle Cameron Fleming, and in the draft, selecting hometown Connor Williams of the Texas Longhorns in the second round. Williams is expected to move inside, to left guard, with Collins staying at right tackle. Left tackle Tyron Smith's injuries in recent seasons are something of a concern, but he, center Travis Frederick and right guard Zack Martin are among the best players at their respective positions in the NFL.

DEFENSE

The Cowboys fielded a top-10 defense last year for the first time since 2009, ranking eighth in yards allowed. But Dallas wants more sacks than the 38 it had last season and more interceptions than the 10 it made a year ago. Defensive coordinator Rod Marinelli's Tampa 2 defense has more playmakers than he ever has had in Dallas, with an upgraded front seven. The secondary was remade last year, with defensive backs being four of the Cowboys' top six draft picks in 2017.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Demarcus Lawrence made only nine sacks in his first three seasons combined. He had 14.5 last season, prompting the Cowboys to use the franchise tag to keep him. Lawrence was the team's first double-digit sacks leader since 2013 when Jason Hatcher made 11. Kony Ealy, who signed in free agency, Tyrone Crawford and Taco Charlton, last season's first-round pick, also will

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Dallas head coach Jason Garrett

Since the Cowboys named Jason Garrett their full-time head coach in 2011, fans have complained about his robotic press conferences. The media nicknamed him "Coach Process" because of his repeated use of the phrase "it's a process." But public opinion of Garrett changed with the release of "All or Nothing" this spring. He showed another side of himself—his true self—with his frequent use of four-letter words as both adjectives and adverbs in the eight-part NFL Films documentary. Garrett attempts to motivate his team with philosophy, stories and inspirational speakers. Every offseason, the Cowboys have a catchphrase they put on T-shirts such as "Finish." Garrett turned over his coaching staff after last year's non-playoff season, but he kept his coordinators, Scott Linehan and Rod Marinelli. They need action to back up the words this season in what could prove a make-or-break one for the head coach.

DALLAS **COWBOYS**

get plenty of snaps to rush the passer. The Cowboys also will benefit if Randy Gregory regains eligibility. In three years, he has played 14 games, while serving 34 games with suspensions. Fourth-round draft pick Dorance Armstrong also has elite pass-rushing ability if he plays like he did in 2016 at Kansas. Tackle David Irving can be a disruptive force inside—he made seven sacks in eight games last season—but he needs to show consistency. Maliek Collins will continue to man the nose position.

LINEBACKERS: The Cowboys now have a first-round pick and two second-round picks as their starting linebackers. They look improved on paper with three starters who can cover a lot of ground. First-round pick Leighton Vander Esch will take over at middle linebacker and could contend for Defensive Rookie of the Year. Marinelli says he was reminded of Brian Urlacher when he watched Vander Esch on film. The addition of Vander Esch allows the Cowboys to move Jaylon Smith from middle linebacker to the strongside.

Smith played 55 percent of the defensive snaps in 2017, and the Cowboys would like to keep that number around 50 percent. Sean Lee remains the mainstay when he's on the field, but he has missed 42 games with injuries in his eight years. Damien Wilson, who has started 15 games the past two seasons, provides depth.

SECONDARY: After drafting three cornerbacks and a safety in the 2017 draft, the Cowboys did nothing to help their secondary in the offseason. They talked to the Seahawks about a trade for Earl Thomas but found Seattle's asking price too high. That leaves Xavier Woods the only true free safety after they moved former first-round pick Byron Jones to cornerback. Jones had trouble in run support and made only two interceptions in his career at safety. He joins Chidobe Awuzie, Jourdan Lewis and Anthony Brown at corner. Jeff Heath proved to be a capable starting strong safety, and Kavon Frazier made some plays as his backup.

SPECIAL TEAMS: In Dan Bailey the

THE LAST TIME ...

Dallas cornerback Everson Walls steals the ball out of the hands of San Francisco's Jerry Rice for an interception on Dec. 22, 1985.

... a Cowboys player led the NFL in interceptions was 1985 when Everson Walls picked off nine passes. Walls, along with defensive end Ed "Too Tall" Jones and Hall-of-Fame defensive tackle Randy White, helped Dallas to a 10-6 record and the NFC East title, marking the final time in legendary coach Tom Landry's career that he advanced to the playoffs. The four-time Pro Bowl cornerback recorded 57 interceptions for his career, which is tied for 13th all-time.

IMPACT NEWCOMER

The Cowboys have searched for a "web" back since Lance Dunbar left in free agency. They expect **Tavon Austin** to be Dunbar 2.0. Dallas traded for Austin on the third day of the draft. Dunbar had 94 rushes for 422 yards and a touchdown and caught 68 passes for 646 yards in 54 games with the Cowboys when he wasn't injured. The Cowboys could use Austin even more. Dallas wants him to get at least 12 touches a game—as a receiver out of the backfield, in the slot and as a returner. Coach Jason Garrett calls Austin a "dynamic mismatch."

Cowboys trust despite his struggles in 2017 after a right groin injury caused him to miss four games. Bailey, who began last season as the NFL's second-most-accurate kicker of all time, uncharacteristically missed five field goals and two extra points. The Cowboys are convinced Bailey's injury was the cause for his misses and are not concerned. Punter Chris Jones has proved to be very consistent and had a 44.1-yard average and a 41.4-yard net in 2017, but he produced only five touchbacks last season. The Cowboys traded Ryan Switzer to Oakland after only one season upon acquiring Austin from the Rams. Austin will return punts and kicks. He returned only one kickoff in each of the last two seasons for Los Angeles.

BOTTOM LINE

The Cowboys still haven't made back-to-back playoff appearances since 2006-07, but they did win nine games last season. Jason Garrett likely faces a make-or-break season, needing at least a playoff victory to get off the hot seat. The Cowboys have only two playoff appearances in Garrett's seven full seasons as head coach and only one playoff win. They don't have a No. 1 receiver, a No. 1 tight end or a veteran free safety. But lesser teams have managed to do what the Cowboys need to do for Garrett to keep his job. Prescott, Elliott, the league's best offensive line and an upgraded front seven on defense could get Dallas back into the postseason.

WALLS: ERIC RISBERG / AP; AUSTIN: RICK SCUTERI / AP

⬊ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **DE** Kony Ealy
  (free agent, N.Y. Jets)
- **FB** Jamize Olawale
  (trade, Oakland)
- **WR** Allen Hurns
  (free agent, Jacksonville)
- **WR** Tavon Austin
  (free agent, L.A. Rams)
- **OT** Cameron Fleming
  (free agent, New England)
- **OG** Marcus Martin
  (free agent, Cleveland)

Kony Ealy

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Cowboys needed to find replacements for Jason Witten, Dez Bryant and Anthony Hitchens after the three big names departed this offseason. The Cowboys believe their first-round pick, **Leighton Vander Esch**, is an upgrade over Hitchens. He doesn't cost them $9 million a season either, which is what the Chiefs signed Hitchens for in free agency. By taking Vander Esch, the Cowboys passed on the top receivers, D.J. Moore and Calvin Ridley. They got a receiver in the third round, however, adding Colorado State's Michael Gallup to their receiver-by-committee approach. The tight end came in the fourth round with the selection of Stanford's Dalton Schultz. Vander Esch is expected to start at middle linebacker, and the Cowboys also found their starting left guard in the draft. After Dallas allowed eight sacks against the Falcons last season, the team's braintrust decided they needed an upgrade at starting left guard as well as improved depth. The Cowboys took offensive lineman Connor Williams, a three-year starter at left tackle at Texas. They will try him at left guard first, hoping to keep La'el Collins at right tackle. The Cowboys nearly traded up for Dorance Armstrong on the second day of the draft but sat tight and ended up having the Kansas pass rusher fall to them in the fourth round.

2018 DRAFT GRADE

B-

⬊ THE COWBOYS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	19	Leighton Vander Esch	LB	6-5	256	21	Boise State
2	50	Connor Williams	OL	6-5	315	21	Texas
3	81	Michael Gallup	WR	6-1	198	22	Colorado State
4	116	Dorance Armstrong	DE	6-4	257	21	Kansas
4	137	Dalton Schultz	TE	6-6	246	22	Stanford
5	171	Mike White	QB	6-5	224	23	Western Kentucky
6	193	Chris Covington	LB	6-2	245	24	Indiana
6	208	Cedrick Wilson	WR	6-2	194	23	Boise State
7	236	Bo Scarbrough	RB	6-1	228	21	Alabama

⬊ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Jason Garrett, **Head Coach;** Scott Linehan, **Offensive Coordinator;** Rod Marinelli, **Defensive Coordinator;** Keith O'Quinn, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4 Prescott, Dak	QB	6-2	238	25	3	Mississippi State
7 Rush, Cooper	QB	6-3	228	24	2	Central Michigan

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
71 Collins, La'el	T	6-4	320	25	4	LSU
78 Edwards, Kadeem	G	6-4	305	27	2	Tennessee State
75 Fleming, Cameron	T	6-6	320	26	5	Stanford
72 Frederick, Travis	C	6-4	320	27	6	Wisconsin
79 Green, Chaz	T	6-5	300	26	4	Florida
62 Jones, Jarron	T	6-5	304	24	1	Notre Dame
73 Looney, Joe	OL	6-3	315	28	6	Wake Forest
60 Martin, Marcus	G	6-3	310	24	5	USC
70 Martin, Zack	G	6-4	310	27	5	Notre Dame
77 Smith, Tyron	T	6-5	320	27	8	USC

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
21 Elliott, Ezekiel	RB	6-0	225	23	3	Ohio State
49 Olawale, Jamize	FB	6-1	240	29	6	North Texas
45 Smith, Rod	RB	6-3	240	26	4	Ohio State
34 Williams, Trey	RB	5-7	194	25	1	Texas A&M

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
Austin, Tavon	WR	5-8	179	28	6	West Virginia
11 Beasley, Cole	WR	5-8	180	29	7	SMU
85 Brown, Noah	WR	6-2	222	22	2	Ohio State
81 Cannon, KD	WR	6-0	182	22	1	Baylor
80 Gathers, Rico	TE	6-6	290	24	2	Baylor
17 Hurns, Allen	WR	6-3	201	26	5	Miami (Fla.)
89 Jarwin, Blake	TE	6-5	246	24	2	Oklahoma State
14 Lenoir, Lance	WR	6-0	201	23	1	Western Illinois
87 Swaim, Geoff	TE	6-4	260	24	4	Texas
15 Thompson, Deonte	WR	6-0	204	29	6	Florida
83 Williams, Terrance	WR	6-2	210	28	6	Baylor

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
93 Ash, Richard	DT	6-3	333	26	2	Western Michigan
97 Charlton, Taco	DE	6-6	273	23	2	Michigan
96 Collins, Maliek	DT	6-2	305	23	3	Nebraska
98 Crawford, Tyrone	DL	6-4	295	28	7	Boise State
76 Ealy, Kony	DE	6-4	275	26	5	Missouri
94 Gregory, Randy	DE	6-5	245	25	2	Nebraska
95 Irving, David	DL	6-7	273	25	4	Iowa State
58 Jones, Datone	DE	6-5	288	28	6	UCLA
90 Lawrence, Demarcus	DE	6-3	265	26	5	Boise State
66 Neal, Lewis	DE	6-0	298	23	2	LSU
92 Price, Brian	DT	6-3	303	24	2	UTSA
68 Ross, Daniel	DT	6-4	325	25	2	Northeast Mississippi CC
99 Tapper, Charles	DE	6-2	270	25	3	Oklahoma
67 Vellano, Joe	DT	6-2	300	29	4	Maryland
Ward, Jihad	DE	6-5	295	24	3	Illinois

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
56 Johnson, Tre'Von	LB	6-1	235	23	1	Weber State
50 Lee, Sean	LB	6-2	245	32	9	Penn State
53 March-Lillard, Justin	LB	6-0	222	25	3	Akron
54 Smith, Jaylon	LB	6-2	240	23	2	Notre Dame
48 Thomas, Joe	LB	6-1	227	27	4	South Carolina State
57 Wilson, Damien	LB	6-1	243	25	4	Minnesota

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
24 Awuzie, Chidobe	CB	6-1	202	23	2	Colorado
30 Brown, Anthony	CB	5-11	196	24	3	Purdue
35 Frazier, Kavon	S	6-0	215	24	3	Central Michigan
38 Heath, Jeff	S	6-1	212	27	6	Saginaw Valley State
20 Huff, Marqueston	S	5-11	196	26	4	Wyoming
31 Jones, Byron	CB	6-0	199	25	4	Connecticut
27 Lewis, Jourdan	CB	5-10	170	23	2	Michigan
28 Showers, Jameill	S	6-2	230	27	1	UTEP
26 Thomas, Duke	CB	5-10	184	24	2	Texas
39 White, Marquez	CB	6-0	172	23	1	Florida State
25 Woods, Xavier	S	5-11	205	23	2	Louisiana Tech

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
5 Bailey, Dan	K	6-0	195	30	8	Oklahoma State
6 Jones, Chris	P	6-0	205	29	7	Carson-Newman
91 Ladouceur, L.P.	LS	6-5	256	37	14	California
2 Maher, Brett	K	6-0	185	28	1	Nebraska

NEW YORK
GIANTS

Eli Manning, QB

MANNING: BILL KOSTROUN / AP

⬊ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Jacksonville	@ Dallas	@ Houston	New Orleans	@ Carolina	Philadelphia	@ Atlanta	Washington
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 11 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 22 / 8:15 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 3-13 **HOME:** 2-6
CONFERENCE: 1-11 **DIVISION:** 1-5

HEAD COACH **PAT SHURMUR** (FIRST YEAR)
CAREER RECORD: 10-23

▶ **ONLINE:** www.giants.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @Giants
▶ **TICKETS:** 201-935-8222
▶ **STADIUM:** MetLife Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 82,500
▶ **TURF:** FieldTurf

New GM, new coaches, new running back, new attitude— the remake is on in New York

BY PAUL SCHWARTZ
New York Post

Never before in the 92-year history of the franchise had the Giants ever lost 13 games in a season, until 2017, which is why co-owner John Mara declared "wholesale changes" were in order.

So, for the first time in 39 years, the Giants enter a season with a new general manager (Dave Gettleman) and new head coach (Pat Shurmur), a purging that did not include the 37-year old quarterback, Eli Manning.

In the eyes of ownership, the tumble to last place in the NFC East and a record of 3-13 did not signal a total rebuild is in order. That is why Manning is back, and the hope is he gets to throw to mega-weapon Odell Beckham Jr. for all 16 games and not the four he played in last season before landing on injured reserve with a fractured left ankle. An improved offensive line, anchored by free-agent addition Nate Solder, and prize rookie running back Saquon Barkley—the No. 2 pick in the NFL Draft—should help Manning regain his form. However, a defense that toppled in 2017 is not stacked with pass-rush prowess and must be considered a work-in-progress.

3 PREDICTED FINISH NFC EAST

OFFENSE

Shurmur brings in his time-tested offensive approach, loaded with West Coast principles. He called the plays last season for the Vikings and will call the plays in his first year with the Giants, even though he hired an offensive coordinator, Mike Shula. In 2017, Shurmur ran the ball 47.5 percent of the time the highest frequency in the league. He loves play-action passing, which happens to be a Manning strength, and will utilize plenty of "rub" routes with his receivers.

QUARTERBACKS: Back for a 15th year is Eli Manning, coming off the most difficult season of his career: He went 3-12 as a starter, saw his consecutive-game starting streak end at 210 games and labored behind a shabby line, surrounded by inferior talent. The new front office and coaching regime studied every one of Manning's 2017 snaps and determined he still has plenty left to offer and thus the decision was made to rebuild around him. He completed 61.6 percent of his passes for 3,468 yards, 19 TDs and 13 interceptions. Too often, he checked down or got down (31.0 sacks) in response to the chaos swirling around him. He needs a comeback season to remind everyone why he is considered a franchise staple. A new offense, an improved line in front of him, a better running game and a healthy Beckham should enliven Manning, who remains in fine physical

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Eli Manning
	Davis Webb
RB	Saquon Barkley
	Jonathan Stewart
LT	Nate Solder
	Adam Bisnowaty
LG	Patrick Omameh
	Jon Halapio
C	Brett Jones
	Jon Halapio
RG	Will Hernandez
	John Greco
RT	Ereck Flowers
	Chad Wheeler
TE	Evan Engram
	Rhett Ellison
WR	Odell Beckham Jr.
	Travis Rudolph
WR	Sterling Shepard
	Cody Latimer
WR	Roger Lewis
	Marquis Bundy

DEFENSE

DE	Dalvin Tomlinson
	Kerry Wynn
NT	Damon Harrison
	B.J. Hill
DE	Josh Mauro
	Romeo Okwara
OLB	Kareem Martin
	Lorenzo Carter
ILB	Alec Ogletree
	Mark Herzlich
ILB	B.J. Goodson
	Calvin Munson
OLB	Olivier Vernon
	Avery Moss
CB	Janoris Jenkins
	Donte Deayon
CB	Eli Apple
	William Gay
SS	Landon Collins
	Michael Thomas
FS	Darian Thompson
	Andrew Adams

SPECIALISTS

LS	Zak DeOssie
P	Riley Dixon
K	Aldrick Rosas
KR	Sterling Shepard
PR	Kalif Raymond

BYE: WEEK 9 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Game may be flexed to Saturday, Dec. 22.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
@ San Francisco	Tampa Bay	@ Philadelphia	Chicago	@ Washington	Tennessee	@ Indianapolis	Dallas
Nov. 12 / 8:15 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23* / TBD*	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

NEW YORK **GIANTS**

Odell Beckham Jr., WR

↘ **5-YEAR WIN TREND**
33-47

7-9	6-10	6-10	11-5	3-13
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
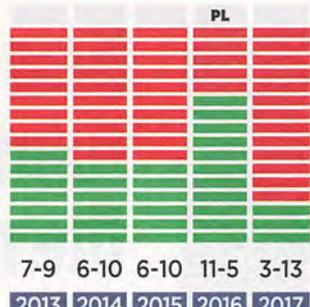
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

shape. Amid all the losing, it was a terrible oversight not to get rookie Davis Webb any time on the field, as this new coaching staff knows little about Webb as he enters his second NFL season. In the fourth round of the draft, the Giants added Kyle Lauletta out of FCS Richmond to develop as he competes with Webb.

RUNNING BACKS: The Giants believe Barkley was the best player in the draft and he plays a part in everything this team will do on offense. The Giants can envision getting him 25 touches a game and are particularly enamored with his pass-catching ability. They will line him up in the backfield, in the slot and split wide. As a rookie, Wayne Gallman ran for 476 yards and averaged 4.3 yards per carry and also caught 34 passes for 193 yards. He showed an ability to grind for extra yardage but is not viewed as an explosive runner; he's more of a

complementary back. Gettleman so valued the toughness and leadership of Jonathan Stewart in Carolina that he signed him in free agency for the Giants, bringing in short-yardage capability and a veteran presence who at age 31 is no longer an every-down back. Paul Perkins had a lost season (90 rushing yards) a year after gaining 456 yards as a rookie and will need to prove he is worthy of a roster spot to the new coaching staff.

RECEIVERS: Beckham entered last season with an ankle issue and never regained full strength before he went down for good in Week Five with a fractured left leg, an injury that crippled an offense that grew too reliant on a huge Beckham play saving the day. A return to peak physical shape is essential, and the Giants also want to see more maturity and fewer distractions from their superstar. Sterling Shepard (59 receptions, 731

yards, 2 TDs) is a potent slot target, possessing uncommon leaping ability, but has only rarely shown game-breaking ability. He missed five games and must stay on the field and provide an uptick in his playmaking. Brandon Marshall, who was supposed to be a towering weapon on the outside, made it through only five games before needing ankle surgery. He was released in mid-April. Roger Lewis (36, 416, 2) has some physical skills as a fourth or fifth option. Cody Latimer was signed as a free agent but was not very productive during his time with the Broncos.

OFFENSIVE LINE: This is a total makeover. Making Solder the NFL's highest-paid offensive lineman shows the investment in improving this unit. Solder was Tom Brady's blind-side protector for seven years and his presence should bring comfort to Manning. Solder needs to

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Giants

"I've got a lot of respect for Dave Gettleman. Nobody's gonna work harder to get the Giants straightened out than Dave. He wants big, strong offensive linemen, he wants big, tough defenders. He wants to be bigger and stronger than everybody else. (Alec) Ogletree's a tremendous athlete and the Giants have been looking for an inside guy for a while. He kind of fits that scheme, 3-4, where he's gonna be able to cover. Guys now have got to be able to cover and run, and he can cover and run. The biggest thing is the locker room—the

locker room is probably the thing that cost them a lot of wins last year. Everything was kind of in disarray. The change of the head coach and general manager and how you take care of business, professionally, is going to give them some wins. You can easily argue five of those games last season were lost with attitude. Nobody really knowing what was going on, (Odell) Beckham being injured and (Sterling) Shepard gets injured. Having everybody healthy and having Nate Solder, a left tackle that can block, and (Ereck) Flowers going where he should go, either right tackle or maybe he'll eventually kick inside to guard. Those changes are big, positive things."

Sterling Shepard
731 receiving yards

2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	3-19	Dallas Cowboys
09/18	L	10-24	Detroit Lions
09/24	L	24-27	Philadelphia Eagles
10/01	L	23-25	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
10/08	L	22-27	Los Angeles Chargers
10/15	W	23-10	Denver Broncos
10/22	L	7-24	Seattle Seahawks
11/05	L	17-51	Los Angeles Rams
11/12	L	21-31	San Francisco 49ers
11/19	W	12-9	Kansas City Chiefs
11/23	L	10-20	Washington Redskins
12/03	L	17-24	Oakland Raiders
12/10	L	10-30	Dallas Cowboys
12/17	L	29-34	Philadelphia Eagles
12/24	L	0-23	Arizona Cardinals
12/31	W	18-10	Washington Redskins

2017 RECORD: 3-13

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Darkwa	171	751	4.4	75t	5
Gallman	111	476	4.3	24	0
Vereen	45	164	3.6	17	0
Perkins	41	90	2.2	14	0
Manning	12	26	2.2	14t	1
G. Smith	4	12	3.0	10	0
Shepard	4	4	1.0	12	0
King	2	3	1.5	11	0
Engram	1	14	14.0	14	0
Beckham Jr.	1	8	8.0	8	0
Berhe	1	2	2.0	2	0
Raymond	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
NEW YORK	394	1,549	3.9	75t	6
OPPONENTS	464	1,933	4.2	51t	10

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Engram	64	722	11.3	35	6
Shepard	59	731	12.4	77t	2
Vereen	44	253	5.8	20	0
Lewis	36	416	11.6	34	2
Gallman	34	193	5.7	11	1
Beckham Jr.	25	302	12.1	48t	3
Ellison	24	235	9.8	27	2
Darkwa	19	116	6.1	13	0
King	18	240	13.3	57t	3
Marshall	18	154	8.6	18	0
Rudolph	8	101	12.6	29	0
Adams	8	92	11.5	38	0
Perkins	8	46	5.8	11	0
Sharp	5	54	10.8	21	1
Powe	2	13	6.5	8	0
Raymond	1	12	12.0	12	0
NEW YORK	373	3,680	9.9	77t	20
OPPONENTS	347	4,199	12.1	83t	32

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Manning	571	352	3,468	19	13
G. Smith	36	21	212	1	0
Vereen	1	0	0	0	1
NEW YORK	608	373	3,479	20	14
OPPONENTS	561	347	4,038	32	13

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Raymond	11	186	16.9	24	0
Vereen	9	196	21.8	30	0
Harris	9	188	20.9	30	0
Beckham Jr.	1	20	20.0	20	0
Sharp	1	19	19.0	19	0
NEW YORK	31	609	19.6	30	0
OPPONENTS	32	656	20.5	47	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Raymond	13	61	4.7	17	0
Harris	7	48	6.9	17	0
Eagan	4	20	5.0	20	0
Sharp	3	19	6.3	13	0
NEW YORK	27	148	5.5	20	0
OPPONENTS	43	448	10.4	88t	1

SACKS NEW YORK 27.0, OPPONENTS 34.0

Pierre-Paul 8.5, Vernon 6.5, Kennard 4.0, Munson 2.0, Harrison 1.5, Berhe 1.0, Bromley 1.0, Tomlinson 1.0, Wynn 1.0, Rodgers-Cromartie 0.5

2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	314.2	21
Rushing	96.8	26
Passing	217.4	19
Scoring	15.4	31
Punt returns	5.5	31
Kick returns	19.6	28
Red zone TD%	48.7	25t
Total defense	373.2	31
Against rush	120.8	27
Against pass	252.4	31
Points allowed	24.2	27t
Interceptions	13	15t
Sacks	27.0	29t
Turnover diff.	-3	20t

anchor a unit that was hurt and terrible last season. Getting guard Will Hernandez out of UTEP in the second round of the draft was a steal and he will start immediately. Hernandez brings bulk and a nastiness on the field. The hope was for disappointing 2015 first-round pick Ereck Flowers to resuscitate his career at right tackle, where he probably belonged in the first place, but he stayed away from offseason work at the team facility and might be on the way out. Canadian Brett Jones moves in at center after playing well while replacing injured Weston Richburg in 2017. Patrick Omameh arrives from the Jaguars and will start at one guard spot, bringing some athleticism and power. Hal Hunter is the third offensive line coach New York has had in the past four years, a sign of turbulence for this unit.

DEFENSE

New defensive coordinator James Bettcher arrives from Arizona bringing with him a 3-4 defensive front featuring an aggressive, penetrating attack that's heavy on pressure via blitzing. This is an altogether new scheme for the Giants, who in the past relied far more heavily on their four-man line, and there is now far more reliance and commitment to linebackers, in terms of quality and quantity. Bettcher called the most blitzes in the NFL in 2015 and 2016 and the fifth most in 2017. He will use multiple fronts but favors the three-man line.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Damon "Snacks" Harrison will once again anchor the interior front, but now he works in what will predominantly be a three-man line, with former end Olivier Vernon shifting over to outside linebacker. Gone completely is Jason Pierre-Paul, a mainstay at end for eight years who was traded to Tampa Bay. His departure removed what little pass-rush presence the Giants have at this spot. Harrison is arguably the best run-stopper in the league and his role will not change much. The same cannot be said of Dalvin Tomlinson, who started all 16 games as a rookie and now will play as a down

INSIDE THE HEADSET
New York head coach Pat Shurmur

Shurmur arrives after guiding the Vikings as their offensive coordinator, getting his second shot at a head-coaching job. He went 9-23 in two years with the Browns and was generally credited with doing a good job in a near-impossible situation in Cleveland. The word most often attached to Shurmur by the Giants is that he is an "adult." They see him as a stabilizing force after such a difficult 2017 season under his predecessor, Ben McAdoo. Shurmur runs his version of the West Coast offense and will call the plays. As a playcaller, Shurmur prefers a balanced attack and is unafraid to run the ball to set up the pass. He worked wonders with Case Keenum in Minnesota and is entrusted with getting Eli Manning back on track.

NEW YORK **GIANTS**

lineman in a three-man front. Josh Mauro was signed from Arizona in part because of his familiarity with Bettcher's system, but Mauro is suspended for the first four games of the season. Second-year pro Avery Moss and re-signed Kerry Wynn will vie for a starting spot. Draft picks B.J. Hill and R.J. McIntosh add depth.

LINEBACKERS: For years this position has been mostly manned by mid-level draft picks and mediocre or over-the-hill veterans. That dynamic changed with the trade for the Rams' Alec Ogletree, who will start on the inside and make the defensive calls. He is a run-and-hit player who should lead this unit in tackles and leadership. The need for improved play here is obvious, with the Giants switching to a 3-4 front, increasing the need for B.J. Goodson to shake off his injury history and stay on the field as Ogletree's running mate on the inside. Together, they could be a deadly duo.

Kareem Martin was signed from the Cardinals for his length on the outside and also for his experience in Bettcher's system. The other starting spot outside goes to Vernon, who moves from a defensive end in a traditional four-man line and will get plenty of snaps in a two-point stance. This could stimulate Vernon's career, as he is best when he can use his speed and power on the

move. Taking Lorenzo Carter in the third round of the draft provided a pass-rush component this team has lacked.

SECONDARY: This group in 2017 was supposed to lead the charge but instead struggled on the field and in the locker room, beset by big plays allowed and a myriad of chemistry issues. Strong safety Landon Collins remains a fixture but did not duplicate his breakthrough 2016 season and went down late with a fractured forearm. Cornerbacks Janoris Jenkins and Eli Apple both missed a game serving suspensions for running afoul of team rules. Jenkins missed the last five games and needed ankle surgery and Apple's immaturity got him called out by teammates and cost him his starting job. The Giants need both corners to have strong rebound seasons and also for 33-year-old former Steelers corner William Gay to come up big in the slot. Darian Thompson was supposed to emerge as a quality free safety last year but, despite starting all 16 games, did not have the expected impact—he had just one interception and missed too many open-field tackles.

SPECIAL TEAMS: This unit is undergoing a makeover, starting with a new coordinator, Thomas McGaughey, a former Giants assistant who most recently ran the special teams for the

IMPACT NEWCOMER

It has been years since the Giants had an impact linebacker and the trade with the Rams to bring in **Alec Ogletree** should put an end to that. Ogletree will start on the inside, make all the defensive calls and immediately command a leadership role. He also is likely to lead his new team in tackles.

Carolina Panthers. Punter Brad Wing was released, as was Dwayne Harris, the primary return man and coverage ace the past few years. Aldrick Rosas endured a rough rookie season at kicker, hitting 18 of 25 field goals and 20 of 23 extra points. Rosas has a powerful leg but his inconsistency will prompt the Giants to sign a veteran to compete with him. The only other kicker on the roster, Marshall Koehn, has appeared in only one NFL regular-season game. The Giants sent a conditional 2019 seventh-round pick to the Broncos for Riley Dixon, who moves in as the favorite to replace Wing as the punter. The additions of safety Michael Thomas (Dolphins) and backup wideout Latimer were based mainly on their special-teams abilities. One constant here is Zak DeOssie, who enters his 12th season as the long snapper.

BOTTOM LINE

There is nowhere to go but up for the Giants, who are coming off one of the worst seasons in franchise history. The pieces are in place to crawl back into playoff contention. The key will be how much better Manning is with a much stronger supporting cast around him, led by the return to health of Beckham, and how effectively new defensive coordinator Bettcher can manufacture a pass rush without a plethora of gifted pass rushers. After a three-win season, the Giants could triple that output and approach nine victories, if things fall into place in Shurmur's first year as their head coach.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C+
2018 STOCKWATCH: OUTPERFORM

THE LAST TIME ...

... (and only time) a Giants player has rushed for at least 20 touchdowns in a season **was 1985 when Joe Morris reached pay dirt 21 times.** The diminutive Morris (5-7), who had rushed for just 703 yards and five touchdowns combined during his first three seasons, exploded for 1,336 yards and 21 scores on 294 carries, helping lead the Giants to a 10-6 record and the playoffs. The following season, Morris would rush for 1,516 yards and 14 touchdowns while leading New York to its first ever Super Bowl title.

↘ NEW ARRIVALS

as of May 1

- **OG** Patrick Omameh
  (free agent, Jacksonville)
- **OT** Nate Solder
  (free agent, New England)
- **LB** Kareem Martin
  (free agent, Arizona)
- **LB** Alec Ogletree
  (trade, L.A. Rams)
- **RB** Jonathan Stewart
  (free agent, Carolina)
- **DE** Josh Mauro
  (free agent, Arizona)

Jonathan Stewart

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Giants did not love any of the quarterbacks in the draft and went with the No. 1 player on their board with the second overall pick. **Saquon Barkley** will help the entire offensive operation and should help keep the Giants' defense off the field. He is a star-in-the-making and head coach Pat Shurmur is already devising ways to get Barkley involved heavily in the running game and passing game. Essentially, the belief is that Barkley can enhance and extend Eli Manning's career. The Giants did not think Will Hernandez would be available with the 34th overall pick and were thrilled he was on the board. It is the same spot in which they took four-time Pro Bowler Chris Snee in 2004 and they hope this works out just as well. Hernandez projects as an immediate starter. Linebacker Lorenzo Carter should see time quickly as a pass-rush specialist until he refines his game, while B.J. Hill should find his way on to the field eventually in a rotation behind Damon Harrison.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
B+

↘ THE GIANTS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	2	Saquon Barkley	RB	5-11	233	21	Penn State
2	34	Will Hernandez	G	6-3	330	23	UTEP
3	66	Lorenzo Carter	LB	6-6	243	22	Georgia
3	69	B.J. Hill	DT	6-3	311	22	N.C. State
4	108	Kyle Lauletta	QB	6-3	191	23	Richmond
5	139	R.J. McIntosh	DT	6-4	291	21	Miami (Fla.)

↘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Pat Shurmur, **Head Coach;** Mike Shula, **Offensive Coordinator;** James Bettcher, **Defensive Coordinator;** Thomas McGaughey, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
10 Manning, Eli	QB	6-4	218	37	15	Ole Miss
5 Webb, Davis	QB	6-5	229	23	2	California

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
61 Becton, Nick	T	6-6	322	28	4	Virginia Tech
66 Bisnowaty, Adam	T	6-6	307	24	1	Pittsburgh
62 Cooper, Ethan	G	6-2	322	23	1	Indiana
74 Flowers, Ereck	T	6-6	329	24	4	Miami (Fla.)
68 Gibson, Laurence	T	6-6	300	27	1	Virginia Tech
73 Greco, John	G	6-4	318	33	11	Toledo
75 Halapio, Jon	G/C	6-2	320	27	2	Florida
77 Jerry, John	G	6-5	340	32	9	Ole Miss
69 Jones, Brett	C	6-2	318	27	4	Regina (Canada)
71 Mama, Damien	G	6-3	342	23	1	USC
70 Omameh, Patrick	G	6-4	327	28	6	Michigan
60 Sokoli, Kristjan	G	6-5	300	26	2	Buffalo
76 Solder, Nate	T	6-8	325	30	8	Colorado
63 Wheeler, Chad	T	6-6	310	24	2	USC

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
22 Gallman, Wayne	RB	6-0	210	23	2	Clemson
28 Perkins, Paul	RB	5-10	208	23	3	UCLA
41 Simmons, Jalen	RB	5-8	220	26	1	South Carolina State
23 Stewart, Jonathan	RB	5-10	240	31	11	Oregon
39 Watson, Terrell	RB	6-1	240	25	2	Azusa Pacific

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
89 Adams, Jerell	TE	6-5	247	25	3	South Carolina
13 Beckham Jr., Odell	WR	5-11	198	25	5	LSU
86 Bundy, Marquis	WR	6-4	215	24	2	New Mexico
81 Carter, Kyle	TE	6-3	245	25	1	Penn State
85 Ellison, Rhett	TE	6-5	250	29	7	USC
88 Engram, Evan	TE	6-3	236	24	2	Ole Miss
6 Etta-Tawo, Amba	WR	6-1	208	24	1	Syracuse
82 Johnson, Keeon	WR	6-2	211	23	2	Virginia
12 Latimer, Cody	WR	6-2	215	25	5	Indiana
18 Lewis, Roger	WR	6-0	196	24	3	Bowling Green
81 O'Malley, Ryan	TE	6-6	260	25	2	Pennsylvania
83 Raymond, Kalif	WR	5-9	160	24	3	Holy Cross
19 Rudolph, Travis	WR	6-0	190	22	2	Florida State
8 Severin, Canaan	WR	6-2	205	25	2	Virginia
84 Sharp, Hunter	WR	5-11	198	24	1	Utah State
87 Shepard, Sterling	WR	5-10	194	25	3	Oklahoma
43 Smith, Shane	TE	6-2	231	25	2	San Jose State

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
64 Banks, Josh	DT	6-3	278	24	2	Wake Forest
98 Harrison, Damon	DT	6-4	350	29	7	William Penn
97 Mauro, Josh	DE	6-6	282	27	5	Stanford
91 Moss, Avery	DE/LB	6-3	265	23	2	Youngstown State
78 Okwara, Romeo	DE	6-5	275	23	3	Notre Dame
99 Thomas, Robert	DT	6-1	331	27	3	Arkansas
94 Tomlinson, Dalvin	DT	6-3	312	24	2	Alabama
79 Williams, Jordan	DE	6-4	276	25	1	Tennessee
72 Wynn, Kerry	DE	6-5	264	27	5	Richmond

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
57 Armbrister, Thurston	LB	6-3	235	25	3	Miami (Fla.)
55 Armstrong, Ray-Ray	LB	6-3	220	27	6	Miami (Fla.)
93 Goodson, B.J.	LB	6-0	242	25	3	Clemson
44 Herzlich, Mark	LB	6-4	246	31	8	Boston College
96 Martin, Kareem	LB	6-6	272	26	5	North Carolina
39 Mathews, Derrick	LB	6-0	232	25	1	Houston
46 Munson, Calvin	LB	6-1	245	23	2	San Diego State
52 Ogletree, Alec	LB	6-2	235	26	6	Georgia
54 Vernon, Olivier	LB	6-2	262	27	7	Miami (Fla.)

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
33 Adams, Andrew	S	5-11	202	25	3	Connecticut
24 Apple, Eli	CB	6-1	199	23	3	Ohio State
21 Collins, Landon	S	6-0	225	24	4	Alabama
38 Deayon, Donte	CB	5-9	158	24	2	Boise State
25 Dixon, Brandon	CB	5-11	203	28	2	Northwest Missouri State
47 Gay, William	CB	5-10	187	33	12	Louisville
20 Jenkins, Janoris	CB	5-10	198	29	7	North Alabama
31 McKinnon, Jeremiah	DB	5-10	197	25	1	Florida International
36 Murphy, Ryan	S	6-0	214	25	1	Oregon State
35 Riley, Curtis	CB	6-0	190	26	4	Fresno State
30 Scott, Tim	DB	5-11	195	25	1	North Carolina
34 Thomas, Michael	S	5-11	195	28	6	Stanford
27 Thompson, Darian	S	6-1	213	24	3	Boise State
37 Webb, B.W.	CB	5-11	190	28	5	William & Mary
29 Williams, Teddy	CB	6-1	210	30	7	UTSA

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
51 DeOssie, Zak	LS	6-4	249	34	12	Brown
15 Dixon, Riley	P	6-4	221	25	3	Syracuse
9 Koehn, Marshall	K	6-0	197	26	1	Iowa
3 Rehkow, Austin	P	6-3	213	23	1	Idaho
2 Rosas, Aldrick	K	6-2	195	23	2	Southern Oregon

WASHINGTON
REDSKINS

Alex Smith, QB

SMITH: NICK WASS / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
@ Arizona	Indianapolis	Green Bay	@ New Orleans	Carolina	Dallas	@ N.Y. Giants	Atlanta
Sept. 9 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 8 / 8:15 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM

2017 RECORD OVERALL: 7-9 HOME: 5-3
CONFERENCE: 5-7 DIVISION: 1-5

HEAD COACH JAY GRUDEN (FIFTH YEAR, 28-35-1)
CAREER RECORD: 28-35-1

▶ **ONLINE:** www.redskins.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @Redskins
▶ **TICKETS:** 301-276-6800
▶ **STADIUM:** FedExField
▶ **CAPACITY:** 82,000
▶ **TURF:** Grass

Mr. Smith goes to Washington looking to dig Redskins out of their hole of mediocrity

BY RICK SNIDER
Washington Post Express

Quarterback Alex Smith better be a quick study or the Washington Redskins are facing another losing season.

Unless Smith carries the offense in his first year in Washington, the Redskins are looking at 6-10 in head coach Jay Gruden's fifth season. That will mean big changes in the coaching staff and front office. So, no pressure on Smith.

The Redskins' defense, of course, is still rebuilding from what seems like the 1991 championship. They lost secondary depth and edge rushers but gained a run-stopper. Washington better average 24 points per game to remain competitive.

The Redskins did well to replace departed quarterback Kirk Cousins by trading for Smith. Basically, Smith is just an older version of Cousins without the contract drama. The Redskins are still a short-passing team that hopefully can run more consistently.

With a challenging schedule that includes the AFC South, NFC South and two games against Philadelphia, Washington may not repeat last year's 7-9.

OFFENSE

Gruden would throw every down if possible. Given a poor running attack, who can blame him? Gruden and offensive coordinator Matt Cavanaugh will occasionally attempt balance by running rookie Derrius Guice regularly. It just depends on the opponent and halftime score.

Offensive tackles Trent Williams and Morgan Moses plus tight end Jordan Reed missing offseason camps following surgeries will make it harder for Smith to find any rhythm early under center.

QUARTERBACKS: Smith replaces Cousins after the latter's franchise tag finally proved too expensive for Washington to keep. Instead, trading for Smith saved the team $17 million against the salary cap. Hopefully, that dough will give Smith some help.

Smith is pretty much just an older version of Cousins. It wouldn't be surprising for him to pass for 4,000 yards. It will probably come in short doses, though, as the Redskins still don't have a steady downfield receiver. Most likely, Smith throws just as often to backs and tight ends as he does to the receivers.

Meanwhile, Colt McCoy remains the backup for the fifth straight year. The Redskins don't like McCoy as a starter, but his knowledge of the system makes him a valuable reserve and mentor even with playing just one game over the last two seasons. Washington traded for Cleveland's Kevin Hogan looking for a

PREDICTED FINISH NFC EAST 4

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Alex Smith
	Colt McCoy
RB	Derrius Guice
	Chris Thompson
LT	Trent Williams
	Ty Nsekhe
LG	Arie Kouandjio
	Kyle Kalis
C	Chase Roullier
	Demetrius Rhaney
RG	Brandon Scherff
	Tyler Catalina
RT	Morgan Moses
	Geron Christian
TE	Jordan Reed
	Vernon Davis
WR	Josh Doctson
	Brian Quick
WR	Jamison Crowder
	Maurice Harris
WR	Paul Richardson
	Robert Davis

DEFENSE

DE	Jonathan Allen
	Anthony Lanier II
NT	Da'Ron Payne
	Ziggy Hood
DE	Matt Ioannidis
	Stacy McGee
OLB	Preston Smith
	Ryan Anderson
ILB	Zach Brown
	Zach Vigil
ILB	Mason Foster
	Martrell Spaight
OLB	Ryan Kerrigan
	Pernell McPhee
CB	Quinton Dunbar
	Orlando Scandrick
CB	Josh Norman
	Fabian Moreau
SS	Montae Nicholson
	Deshazor Everett
FS	D.J. Swearinger
	Fish Smithson

SPECIALISTS

LS	Nick Sundberg
P	Tress Way
K	Dustin Hopkins
KR	Samaje Perine
PR	Quinton Dunbar

BYE: WEEK 4 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Game may be flexed to Saturday, Dec. 22.

Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17
@ Tampa Bay	Houston	@ Dallas	@ Philadelphia	N.Y. Giants	@ Jacksonville	@ Tennessee	Philadelphia
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 22 / 4:30 PM	Dec. 3 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23* / TBD*	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

WASHINGTON **REDSKINS**

Jamison Crowder, WR

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
31-48-1

3-13	4-12	9-7	8-7-1	7-9
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
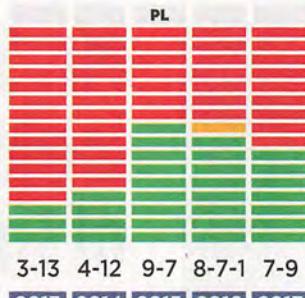
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

developemental passer.

RUNNING BACKS: A unit with a lot of nothing last year suddenly has a breakout rusher. The Redskins gained first-round talent Derrius Guice in the late second round when a draft-day report diminished the LSU runner's value. Washington badly needed a prime back and Guice immediately gets the starting role over a mediocre cast.

As long as Guice has no off-field issues, Washington gained a steal in the draft. The key is whether Guice can run outside in the NFL while also making good decisions when running inside where he can bang away. He's a good blocker as well and will be needed to help protect Smith.

Guice isn't a third-down back, but that's Chris Thompson's role anyway. Thompson is highly productive when limited to a dozen touches per game. He's

the team's passing option in the backfield. Samaje Perine gets the short-yardage role after a disappointing rookie year. Last year's season-opening starter, Rob Kelley, may be pressed to make the team.

RECEIVERS: Either Josh Doctson finally proves why he was a 2016 first-round pick or the Redskins' passing game is in trouble. He's supposed to be the lead target despite a lackluster 35 catches last season, though his 14.3-yard average and six touchdowns offers hope. Doctson needs to improve his hands in traffic and become a bigger presence downfield.

Jamison Crowder comes off a team-high 66 catches, but early injuries limited his impact until the final month. Paul Richardson Jr. was the big free-agent signing for this unit. He caught a career-best 44 passes with six touchdowns in Seattle last season. He should become the deep threat but is also a sharp

route-runner in the red zone.

Reed is the team's offensive star, but missing 10 games last year and getting hurt in all five seasons has the Redskins realizing the 6-2, 246-pound tight end is a part-time player. Vernon Davis remains an amazing 34-year-old reserve behind Reed.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The Redskins have quietly developed a solid young line. But the franchise is coming up on a decision over left tackle Williams. The six-time Pro Bowler and offensive captain hasn't played a full season since 2013 and missed six games last year with a knee injury. Basically, the nine-year veteran has been a bag of sore bones for several seasons and turns 30 years old before training camp. Washington re-signed reserve tackle Ty Nsekhe and drafted Louisville's Geron Christian in case Williams can't stay healthy.

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Redskins

"The biggest question is whether receiver Josh Doctson comes through. Health and Doctson are really the keys to the offense. They also need (receiver) Jamison Crowder to come back to his level in 2016 after health problems last year. Paul Richardson gives them speed at receiver and can make big plays, but he's not been consistent. A healthy Chris Thompson at running back would be huge. Tight

end Jordan Reed, you just can't count him to stay healthy. Vernon Davis played well last year but was underutilized. Alex Smith will keep them good at quarterback. Defensively, stopping the run is a major issue and they need a second pass rusher. They also lost two corners so hopefully Fabian Moreau can step up. Overall, their biggest strength is offensive line and quarterback. Their biggest liabilities are stopping the run game and their own running game. If all goes right, they're a decent team."

⬎ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	17-30	Philadelphia Eagles
09/17	W	27-20	Los Angeles Rams
09/24	W	27-10	Oakland Raiders
10/02	L	20-29	Kansas City Chiefs
10/15	W	26-24	San Francisco 49ers
10/23	L	24-34	Philadelphia Eagles
10/29	L	19-33	Dallas Cowboys
11/05	W	17-14	Seattle Seahawks
11/12	L	30-38	Minnesota Vikings
11/19	L	31-34	New Orleans Saints
11/23	W	20-10	New York Giants
11/30	L	14-38	Dallas Cowboys
12/10	L	13-30	Los Angeles Chargers
12/17	W	20-15	Arizona Cardinals
12/24	W	27-11	Denver Broncos
12/31	L	10-18	New York Giants

2017 RECORD: 7-9

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Perine	175	603	3.4	30	1
Thompson	64	294	4.6	61t	2
Kelley	62	194	3.1	21	3
Cousins	49	179	3.7	18	4
Bibbs	21	79	3.8	16	0
Marshall	9	32	3.6	11	0
M. Brown	8	29	3.6	11	0
Crowder	7	34	4.9	11	0
Daniels	3	14	4.7	8	0
Paul	2	4	2.0	5	0
Doctson	1	-14	-14.0	-14	0
WASHINGTON	401	1,448	3.6	61t	10
OPPONENTS	472	2,146	4.5	75t	13

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Crowder	66	789	12.0	41	3
Grant	45	573	12.7	40t	4
Davis	43	648	15.1	69	3
Thompson	39	510	13.1	74	4
Doctson	35	502	14.3	52t	6
Reed	27	211	7.8	20	2
Perine	22	182	8.3	25	1
Pryor Sr.	20	240	12.0	44t	1
Bibbs	14	128	9.1	36t	1
Paul	13	94	7.2	32	0
Quick	6	76	12.7	31	0
Marshall	6	36	6.0	12	0
Harris	4	62	15.5	36t	1
Kelley	4	18	4.5	9	0
Sprinkle	2	13	6.5	7t	1
M. Brown	1	11	11.0	11	0
WASHINGTON	347	4,093	11.8	74	27
OPPONENTS	306	3,692	12.1	75t	23

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Cousins	540	347	4,093	27	13
WASHINGTON	540	347	3,751	27	13
OPPONENTS	531	306	3,420	23	16

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Breeland	10	208	20.8	35	0
Thompson	8	165	20.6	29	0
Marshall	4	89	22.3	29	0
Harris	3	71	23.7	34	0
Paul	3	47	15.7	24	0
Perine	2	48	24.0	28	0
Bibbs	2	17	8.5	17	0
Kelley	1	16	16.0	16	0
Fuller	1	12	12.0	12	0
WASHINGTON	34	673	19.8	35	0
OPPONENTS	24	448	18.7	34	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Crowder	27	171	6.3	29	0
Hall	2	7	3.5	7	0
WASHINGTON	29	178	6.1	29	0
OPPONENTS	39	435	11.2	83t	1

SACKS   WASHINGTON 42.0, OPPONENTS 41.0

Kerrigan 13.0, Smith 8.0, Lanier 5.0, Ioannidis 4.5, Galette 3.0, Z. Brown 2.5, McClain 2.0, Allen 1.0, Foster 0.5, Harvey-Clemons 0.5, Hood 0.5, Swearinger 0.5

⬎ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	324.9	16
Rushing	90.5	28
Passing	234.4	12
Scoring	21.4	16
Punt returns	6.1	27
Kick returns	19.8	25
Red zone TD%	54.4	16
Total defense	347.9	21
Against rush	134.1	32
Against pass	213.8	9
Points allowed	24.2	27t
Interceptions	16	9t
Sacks	42.0	7t
Turnover diff.	-4	23t

Right tackle Moses joins Williams on the sideline until training camp after having offseason surgery. He was the only lineman to play every game last season despite doing much of it with two sprained ankles. Right guard Brandon Scherff made his second straight Pro Bowl. Center Chase Roullier returns as the starter after a solid rookie year. Left guard is wide open entering preseason.

DEFENSE

Defensive coordinator Greg Manusky loves to blitz and force opponents into mistakes. The problem is Washington lost two edge rushers in free agency and linebackers Ryan Kerrigan and Preston Smith are streaky despite their high sack numbers. Still, drafting Alabama nose tackle Da'Ron Payne should allow Washington to gamble more on the outside given the Redskins won't be overrun down the middle.

The Redskins also lost two cornerbacks over the offseason, but they're high on young stars Fabian Moreau at cornerback and Montae Nicholson at strong safety. However, cornerback Josh Norman needs to rebound from a lackluster year and face the top opposing receiver more often.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Drafting Payne in the first round suddenly elevated a Washington run defense that was last in the NFL into a potential top-10 unit. Payne

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Washington head coach Jay Gruden
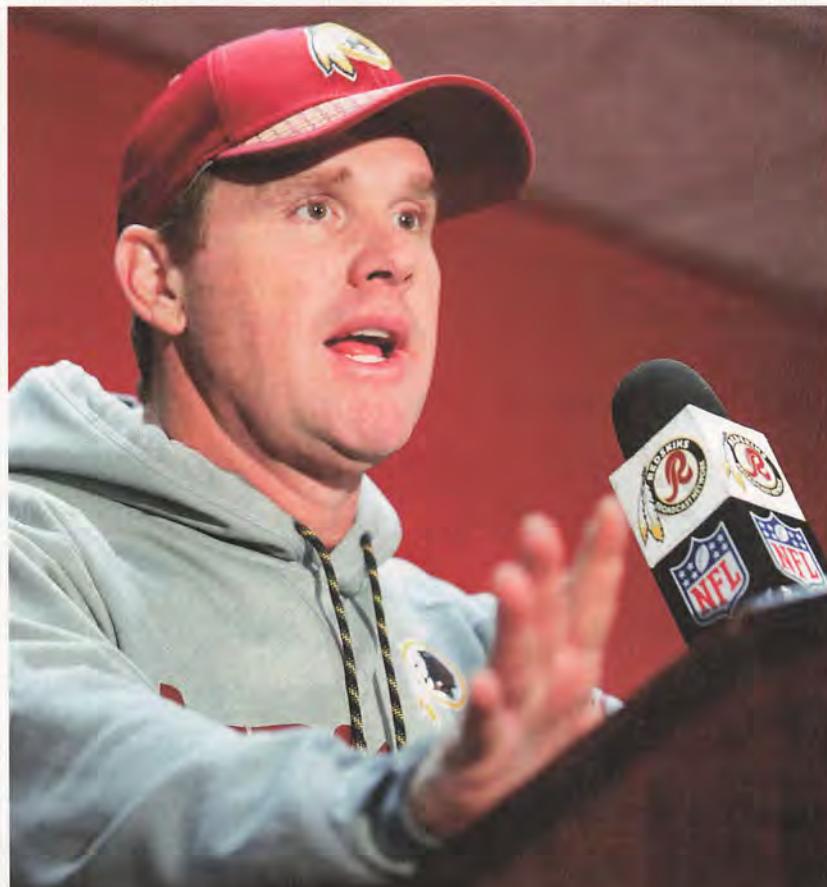
Gruden becomes the first coach to reach five years during owner Dan Snyder's 20 seasons as owner. Mostly, it's because Gruden worries about the team and not team politics. Gruden is well liked in the locker room because he treats players like men, doesn't beat them up in practice and generally uses a joke rather than sharp criticism to illustrate his point. Gruden loves to throw, runs when he must and lets the defensive coordinator worry about that side of the ball. However, pressure to make the playoffs or bust could push the affable coach to the edge this fall.

GRUDEN: ALEX BRANDON / AP

WASHINGTON **REDSKINS**

pledges to be a better pass rusher, but he'll mostly be there to seal the middle. Payne playing between young ends like Matt Ioannidis and former Alabama standout Jonathan Allen gives Washington its best young line since the 1980s. Depth includes end Anthony Lanier and nose tackle Ziggy Hood, who may play more end this year. With the NFC East sporting three top running games, Washington needed to bolster this unit.

LINEBACKERS: The Redskins retained their core players at linebacker but lost depth over the offseason that proved vital in 2017. Inside linebacker Zach Brown was having a monster season with 127 tackles before missing the final three games with injuries. Mason Foster was the inside signal-caller before also getting injured and missing 11 games. They must stay healthy because the reserves are still young.

Outside man Kerrigan made a second straight Pro Bowl after coming up with 13.0 sacks. Kerrigan has 71.5 sacks in seven seasons, but they tend to come in bunches. The same goes for his outside counterpart, Preston Smith, whose eight sacks last season included three in the final month.

Washington hopes second-round outside 'backer Ryan Anderson (another Alabama product) rebounds from a poor rookie campaign. The upside is that Martrell Spaight and Zach Vigil are young, solid inside reserves. Overall, the unit needs to cover tight ends better and improve run coverage.

SECONDARY: The Redskins resisted drafting a prominent defensive back because they love their younger players and have solid veterans.

Free safety D.J. Swearinger was the team's best defender and emotional leader last year. He's a banger who backs up big talk. Strong safety Nicholson comes off an impressive rookie season during which his smarts kept him near the ball. His backup, Deshazor Everett, also wowed coaches late last season.

Quinton Dunbar replaces departed free agent Bashaud Breeland as the No. 2 corner while Dallas free agent Orlando Scandrick becomes the third corner.

Then there's Norman. After an impressive 2016, Norman was disappointing last year. He didn't always cover the best opposing receiver and netted no interceptions. That's just not enough for the team's second-highest-paid player this year at $16.8 million. It could be his third and final season in Washington because the Redskins really like his young backup, Moreau.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The Redskins so like kicker Dustin Hopkins that they waited

IMPACT NEWCOMER

Free-agent receiver **Paul Richardson Jr.** from Seattle becomes Washington's downfield threat that was missing last season after it chose not to re-sign DeSean Jackson. The Redskins have plenty of midrange receivers, but Richardson stretches the field. Finally healthy, the fifth-year wideout caught 44 passes for 703 yards and six touchdowns last season with the Seahawks.

eight weeks for his return for last season's final month rather than place him on injured reserve with a hip flexor. Hopkins is already fifth in team history with 73 field goals over three seasons and has an 83.9-percent conversion rate. The fact that replacement Nick Rose converted 10 of 11 field goals during Hopkins' absence didn't even tempt Washington to retain him. Washington prefers Hopkins' deep kickoffs that regularly reach the stands. Indeed, opponents returned only 24 kickoffs against the Redskins last season.

Punter Tress Way averaged 45.7 yards with 33 boots dropped inside the 20-yard line. Long snapper Nick Sundberg enters his ninth season as one of the NFL's steadier specialists.

Washington will look for a punt returner. Crowder's increased receiving role saw his returns diminished last year to a poor 6.3 yards per runback. The kick returner will also be new after Breeland's free-agent exit.

BOTTOM LINE

The Redskins put a lot of short-term effort over three seasons to manage a combined 24-23-1 mark with one playoff loss. Now they're rebuilding and shouldn't expect better than 7-9 for the second straight year. It will take a massive effort by new quarterback Smith, a rebirth of the running game and Gruden ignoring that his future is on the line for the team to slug its way through a very tough schedule. A fast start, continued good health after two massive injury-plagued seasons and a rebound year by Norman in the secondary are also cornerstones to winning.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Redskins had a wide receiver make the Pro Bowl in three consecutive seasons was when **Art Monk** accomplished the feat during 1984-86. Monk's best season as a pro came in 1984 when he hauled in 106 receptions for 1,372 yards and seven touchdowns. The 2008 Hall-of-Fame inductee helped lead Washington to three Super Bowl titles during his 14 years with the team.

⬎ NEW ARRIVALS

- **QB** Alex Smith
  (trade, Kansas City)
- **LB** Pernell McPhee
  (free agent, Chicago)
- **CB** Orlando Scandrick
  (free agent, Dallas)
- **WR** Paul Richardson
  (free agent, Seattle)
- **QB** Kevin Hogan
  (trade, Cleveland)

Orlando Scandrick

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The first-round selection of Alabama nose tackle **Da'Ron Payne** was the perfect blend of need and top player on the board. The Redskins are desperate to stop the run and Payne should solve interior problems in an NFC East that now sports three top running games. Payne alone would have ensured a good draft for Washington, but the Redskins traded back in the second round and got the running back they needed in LSU's Derrius Guice, who may turn out to be the steal of the draft. The trade also netted a third-rounder that turned out to be Louisville offensive tackle Geron Christian. Christian can play both the left and right sides and gives the Redskins a solid backup for oft-injured starting tackles Trent Williams and Morgan Moses.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
A

⬎ THE REDSKINS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	13	Da'Ron Payne	DT	6-2	311	21	Alabama
2	59	Derrius Guice	RB	5-11	224	21	LSU
3	74	Geron Christian	T	6-5	298	22	Louisville
4	109	Troy Apke	S	6-1	200	23	Penn State
5	163	Tim Settle	DT	6-3	329	21	Virginia Tech
6	197	Shaun Dion Hamilton	LB	6-0	228	22	Alabama
7	241	Greg Stroman	CB	5-11	182	22	Virginia Tech
7	256	Trey Quinn	WR	6-0	203	22	SMU

⬎ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Jay Gruden, **Head Coach;** Matt Cavanaugh, **Offensive Coordinator;** Greg Manusky, **Defensive Coordinator;** Ben Kotwica, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
	Hogan, Kevin	QB	6-3	218	25	3	Stanford
12	McCoy, Colt	QB	6-1	215	32	9	Texas
11	Smith, Alex	QB	6-4	217	34	14	Utah

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
60	Balducci, Alex	OL	6-4	310	24	1	Oregon
66	Bergstrom, Tony	OL	6-5	315	32	7	Utah
68	Catalina, Tyler	G	6-4	325	25	2	Georgia
69	Clemmings, T.J.	T	6-5	309	26	4	Pittsburgh
	Franklin, Orlando	OL	6-6	315	30	7	Miami (Fla.)
78	Jefferson, Cameron	OL	6-5	317	26	1	Arkansas
67	Kalis, Kyle	G	6-4	302	24	2	Michigan
63	Kling, John	OL	6-8	328	25	1	Buffalo
60	Kouandjio, Arie	G	6-5	316	26	4	Alabama
76	Moses, Morgan	T	6-6	335	27	5	Virginia
79	Nsekhe, Ty	T	6-8	338	32	4	Texas State
74	Rhaney, Demetrius	C	6-2	301	26	5	Tennessee State
73	Roullier, Chase	C	6-4	317	25	2	Wyoming
75	Scherff, Brandon	G	6-5	319	26	4	Iowa
71	Williams, Trent	T	6-5	320	30	9	Oklahoma

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
39	Bibbs, Kapri	RB	5-11	203	25	3	Colorado State
20	Kelley, Rob	RB	6-0	233	25	3	Tulane
34	Marshall, Byron	RB	5-9	201	24	2	Oregon
	Marshall, Keith	RB	5-11	222	24	1	Georgia
32	Perine, Samaje	RB	5-11	236	22	2	Oklahoma
25	Thompson, Chris	RB	5-8	191	27	5	Florida State

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
	Bazile, Chris	TE	6-4	250	26	1	Grambling State
80	Crowder, Jamison	WR	5-9	177	25	4	Duke
19	Davis, Robert	WR	6-3	217	23	1	Georgia State
85	Davis, Vernon	TE	6-3	244	34	13	Maryland
18	Doctson, Josh	WR	6-2	206	25	3	TCU
82	Garner, Manasseh	TE	6-2	239	26	1	Pittsburgh
13	Harris, Maurice	WR	6-3	200	25	3	California
83	Quick, Brian	WR	6-3	218	29	7	Appalachian State
86	Reed, Jordan	TE	6-2	246	28	6	Florida
	Richardson Jr., Paul	WR	6-0	183	26	5	Colorado
87	Sprinkle, Jeremy	TE	6-5	252	24	2	Arkansas

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
95	Allen, Jonathan	DL	6-3	288	23	2	Alabama
63	Barnes Sr., Tavaris	DL	6-4	284	26	3	Clemson
64	Francis, A.J.	DL	6-5	337	28	4	Maryland
90	Hood, Ziggy	DL	6-3	305	31	10	Missouri
	Hughes, Montori	DL	6-4	350	28	4	UT Martin
98	Ioannidis, Matt	DL	6-3	305	24	3	Temple
72	Lanier II, Anthony	DL	6-6	286	25	3	Alabama A&M
97	McClain, Terrell	DL	6-2	302	30	8	South Florida
92	McGee, Stacy	DL	6-3	341	28	6	Oklahoma
74	Pipkins, Ondre	DL	6-3	321	24	1	Texas Tech
99	Taylor Sr., Phil	DL	6-3	343	30	5	Baylor

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
52	Anderson, Ryan	LB	6-2	253	24	2	Alabama
53	Brown, Zach	LB	6-1	251	28	7	North Carolina
54	Foster, Mason	LB	6-1	250	29	8	Washington
40	Harvey-Clemons, Josh	LB	6-4	226	24	2	Louisville
91	Kerrigan, Ryan	LB	6-4	259	30	8	Purdue
59	McCalister, Alex	LB	6-6	239	24	2	Florida
	McKinzy, Cassanova	LB	6-3	257	25	1	Auburn
	McPhee, Pernell	LB	6-3	269	29	8	Mississippi State
45	Robertson, Pete	LB	6-2	243	25	1	Texas Tech
94	Smith, Preston	LB	6-5	265	25	4	Mississippi State
50	Spaight, Martrell	LB	6-0	243	25	4	Arkansas
56	Vigil, Zach	LB	6-2	238	27	4	Utah State

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
47	Dunbar, Quinton	CB	6-2	197	26	4	Florida
22	Everett, Deshazor	S	6-0	195	26	4	Texas A&M
38	Holsey, Joshua	CB	5-11	195	24	2	Auburn
	Ladler, Kenny	DB	6-0	207	26	2	Vanderbilt
31	Moreau, Fabian	CB	6-0	198	24	2	UCLA
35	Nicholson, Montae	S	6-2	216	22	2	Michigan State
24	Norman, Josh	CB	6-0	200	30	7	Coastal Carolina
	Sample, James	DB	6-2	217	26	2	Louisville
	Scandrick, Orlando	CB	5-10	196	31	11	Boise State
37	Smithson, Fish	S	5-11	196	24	1	Kansas
36	Swearinger, D.J.	S	5-10	205	27	6	South Carolina

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
3	Hopkins, Dustin	K	6-2	203	27	5	Florida State
	Irwin-Hill, Sam	P	6-3	210	27	1	Arkansas
57	Sundberg, Nick	LS	6-0	256	31	9	California
5	Way, Tress	P	6-1	216	28	5	Oklahoma

MINNESOTA
VIKINGS

Stefon Diggs, WR

DIGGS: JEFF ROBERSON / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
San Francisco	@ Green Bay	Buffalo	@ L.A. Rams	@ Philadelphia	Arizona	@ N.Y. Jets	New Orleans
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 27 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 7 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 8:20 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 13-3 **HOME:** 7-1
CONFERENCE: 10-2 **DIVISION:** 5-1

HEAD COACH **MIKE ZIMMER** (FIFTH YEAR, 39-25)
CAREER RECORD: 39-25

▸ **ONLINE:** www.vikings.com
▸ **TWITTER:** @Vikings
▸ **TICKETS:** 612-33-VIKES
▸ **STADIUM:** U.S. Bank Stadium
▸ **CAPACITY:** 66,665
▸ **TURF:** FieldTurf

It's all aboard Vikings' ship to get to a Super Bowl for the first time in 4 decades

BY MARK CRAIG
Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Kirk Cousins and the Vikings have no excuses. It's Super Bowl or sadness for the $84 million quarterback and his hand-picked new team, which went 13-3 and reached the conference finals with career journeyman Case Keenum making $2 million a year ago.

"We'd be here a long time if I were to read off the grocery list of reasons why this is the right fit," says Cousins, who turned down the Jets' offer of $90 million guaranteed. "For the sake of time, I'll just say 'winning.' It's the best chance to win."

Signing the richest contract in league history–and the first ever fully guaranteed multiyear deal–means Cousins is no longer the plucky, feel-good underdog story. The pressure is on. Can he and the Vikings handle it? Head coach Mike Zimmer's defense ranked No. 1 in points and yards allowed last season. But it also gave up 62 points in its last six quarters, including the 38-7 NFC title game loss at Philadelphia.

PREDICTED FINISH NFC NORTH 1

OFFENSE

The Vikings struck a nice run-pass balance last year with a better offensive line, a new zone-blocking scheme and a system that was more flexible in Pat Shurmur's first full season as offensive coordinator than it was under his predecessor, Norv Turner. It earned Shurmur the Giants' head-coaching job, which led the Vikings to hire Eagles quarterbacks coach John DeFilippo as their new OC. The offense won't change much, but DeFilippo will add some of Philadelphia's run-pass option looks, as well as plays that fit Cousins' strengths.

QUARTERBACKS: People on both sides of the Cousins fence will be interested to see how this $84 million experiment turns out. Those who argue that he's a no-brainer franchise quarterback point to his three consecutive seasons with at least 4,000 yards and 25 touchdowns. To put that in perspective, the Vikings have had only three of those in their 57 seasons. Those performances were turned in by Daunte Culpepper (2004) and Hall-of-Famers Warren Moon (1995) and Brett Favre (2009).

On the flip side, those who argue that Cousins isn't a difference-maker will point to his career record of 26-30-1 in the regular season and 0-2 in the playoffs. Meanwhile, needing an experienced, but salary cap-friendly backup, the Vikings traded a 2019 fifth-round pick to Denver for Trevor Siemian and a seventh-round pick this year. Siemian is 13-11 as a starter. He also costs just $1.9 million in the last year of his contract.

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	**Kirk Cousins**
	Trevor Siemian
FB	**C.J. Ham**
RB	**Dalvin Cook**
	Latavius Murray
LT	**Riley Reiff**
	Rashod Hill
LG	**Nick Easton**
	Josh Andrews
C	**Pat Elflein**
	Cornelius Edison
RG	**Tom Compton**
	Danny Isidora
RT	**Mike Remmers**
	Brian O'Neill
TE	**Kyle Rudolph**
	David Morgan
WR	**Stefon Diggs**
	Kendall Wright
WR	**Adam Thielen**
	Laquon Treadwell

DEFENSE
DE	**Danielle Hunter**
	Brian Robison
NT	**Linval Joseph**
	Dylan Bradley
DT	**Sheldon Richardson**
	Jaleel Johnson
DE	**Everson Griffen**
	Stephen Weatherly
WLB	**Ben Gedeon**
	Reshard Cliett
MLB	**Eric Kendricks**
	Kentrell Brothers
SLB	**Anthony Barr**
	Eric Wilson
CB	**Trae Waynes**
	Mike Hughes
CB	**Xavier Rhodes**
	Mackensie Alexander
SS	**Andrew Sendejo**
	Jayron Kearse
FS	**Harrison Smith**
	Anthony Harris

SPECIALISTS
LS	Kevin McDermott
P	Ryan Quigley
K	Daniel Carlson
KR	Mike Hughes
PR	Marcus Sherels

BYE: WEEK 10 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 9	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17
Detroit	@ Chicago	Green Bay	@ New England	@ Seattle	Miami	@ Detroit	Chicago
Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 2 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 10 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

MINNESOTA **VIKINGS**

New Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins, second from left, poses with head coach Mike Zimmer, general manager Rick Spielman and owner Mark Wilf.

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
44-35-1

5-10-1	7-9	11-5	8-8	13-3
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

RUNNING BACKS: Dalvin Cook was everything the Vikings had hoped for and more last season–until, of course, he tore his left ACL during a Week Four loss to the Lions. He'll be at full strength when camp opens, so the Vikings are expecting the same explosive, multidimensional threat who was among the early front-runners for Offensive Rookie of the Year. When he went down, Cook was averaging 4.8 yards per carry and just starting to show how dangerous he could be in the Vikings' much-improved screen game. The team also believes Cook has stiff-armed the character concerns that caused him to fall out of the first round of last year's draft. Latavius Murray will return to his role as a backup and short-yardage power back. He was slowed early last year by offseason ankle surgery, but improved as his health returned. The Vikings lost a solid third-down back when free agent Jerick McKinnon left for a bigger role with the 49ers.

RECEIVERS: The Vikings don't have anyone who looks like the prototypical No. 1 receiver. But they do have Adam Thielen, whose rags-to-riches story took another leap last season to second-team All-Pro. He doesn't overwhelm anybody with size, but he does have an extra gear, runs excellent routes and attacks the ball with vision, timing and sure hands. He had a team-high 91 catches for 1,276 yards.

Stefon Diggs can be equally dangerous when healthy. He had eight regular-season touchdowns and, of course, the "Minneapolis Miracle," a walk-off score to beat the Saints in the playoffs. Tight end Kyle Rudolph is still in his prime as a mismatch for defenses, and the bum ankle that slowed him late last year has been repaired. Former Bear and Titan

Kendall Wright, who never lived up to his first-round selection in 2012, is the new No. 3 receiver after Jarius Wright was released. Laquon Treadwell, the Vikings' 2016 first-round pick, has been a disappointment. He struggles to separate from defenders and returns as the No. 4 receiver.

OFFENSIVE LINE: This unit was at the core of last year's turnaround. It helped make the running game respectable, the defense fresher, Shurmur a head coach and Keenum a lot of money. But better durability and a stronger finish is needed. General manager Rick Spielman hit a home run by signing left tackle Riley Reiff in free agency last year. It stabilized what was the weakest position in 2016. Drafting Pat Elflein in the third round last year solidified the interior, allowing Nick Easton to move to left guard and Spielman to release Alex

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Vikings

"The Vikings might have the best defense in the game, but, as you saw in that loss to the Eagles (in the NFC Championship game), they're susceptible to an offense that works run-pass option plays as well as the Eagles do. If you can get Zim to show his hand—lean one way, so to speak—you can hit them with some explosive plays. But it's not easy. They have All-Pro-type talent at all three levels.

"Offensively, there's so much left to learn with (new offensive coordinator John) DeFilippo coming over from Philadelphia and (Kirk) Cousins taking over at quarterback. Also, that running back **(Dalvin Cook)** is coming back from the ACL. He was something special before he went down (in Week Four). The line was much improved but, as you saw in that Eagles game, it was worn out at the end. The line holds the key to whether Cousins and DeFilippo succeed."

↘ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/11	W	29-19	New Orleans Saints
09/17	L	9-26	Pittsburgh Steelers
09/24	W	34-17	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
10/01	L	7-14	Detroit Lions
10/09	W	20-17	Chicago Bears
10/15	W	23-10	Green Bay Packers
10/22	W	24-16	Baltimore Ravens
10/29	W	33-16	Cleveland Browns
11/12	W	38-30	Washington Redskins
11/19	W	24-7	Los Angeles Rams
11/23	W	30-23	Detroit Lions
12/03	W	14-9	Atlanta Falcons
12/10	L	24-31	Carolina Panthers
12/17	W	34-7	Cincinnati Bengals
12/23	W	16-0	Green Bay Packers
12/31	W	23-10	Chicago Bears
2017 RECORD: 13-3			

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Murray	216	842	3.9	46	8
McKinnon	150	570	3.8	58t	3
Cook	74	354	4.8	33	2
Keenum	40	160	4.0	22	1
Diggs	8	13	1.6	9	0
Ham	7	13	1.9	3	1
Bridgewater	3	-3	-1.0	-1	0
Bradford	2	-3	-1.5	-1	0
Thielen	1	11	11.0	11	0
MINNESOTA	501	1,957	3.9	58t	15
OPPONENTS	364	1,337	3.7	62	10

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Thielen	91	1,276	14.0	65t	4
Diggs	64	849	13.3	59t	8
Rudolph	57	532	9.3	34	8
McKinnon	51	421	8.3	41	2
Treadwell	20	200	10.0	25	0
Wright	18	198	11.0	30	2
Murray	15	103	6.9	28	0
Cook	11	90	8.2	36	0
Morgan	10	95	9.5	23	1
Floyd	10	78	7.8	19	0
Ham	7	68	9.7	12	0
Bell	3	19	6.3	12	0
MINNESOTA	357	3,929	11.0	65t	25
OPPONENTS	324	3,329	10.3	52	13

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Keenum	481	325	3,547	22	7
Bradford	43	32	382	3	0
Bridgewater	2	0	0	0	1
Quigley	1	0	0	0	0
MINNESOTA	527	357	3,753	25	8
OPPONENTS	555	324	3,078	13	14

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
McKinnon	12	312	26.0	39	0
Sherels	11	271	24.6	32	0
Coley	1	19	19.0	19	0
Brown	1	17	17.0	17	0
MINNESOTA	25	619	24.8	39	0
OPPONENTS	45	1,023	22.7	71	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Sherels	39	372	9.5	46	0
MINNESOTA	39	372	9.5	46	0
OPPONENTS	24	213	8.9	59t	1

SACKS	MINNESOTA 37.0, OPPONENTS 27.0

Griffen 13.0, Hunter 7.0, Robison 4.0, Joseph 3.5, Johnson 2.0, Smith 1.5, Barr 1.0, Bower 1.0, Kendricks 1.0, Stephen 1.0, Waynes 1.0

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	356.9	11
Rushing	122.3	7
Passing	234.6	11
Scoring	23.9	10
Punt returns	9.5	8
Kick returns	24.8	4
Red zone TD%	55.6	12t
Total defense	275.9	1
Against rush	83.6	2
Against pass	192.4	2
Points allowed	15.8	1
Interceptions	14	13t
Sacks	37.0	17t
Turnover diff.	+5	12t

Boone, whose signing in free agency the year before was a mistake. Joe Berger's retirement leaves some steady shoes to fill at right guard. Former Bear Tom Compton is a possibility. So is Mike Remmers, who began 2017 as the starting right tackle but appears better at guard. Rashod Hill, who started seven games in 2017, is better suited as a swing tackle. Rookie Brian O'Neill, a second-round pick out of Pitt, has played both tackle spots since converting from tight end as a college freshman.

DEFENSE

Zimmer takes an offensive approach to defense: Stop the run, gain favorable downs and distances, then force the offense to react to the calls he makes. Known for his many double-A gap looks and pressures, Zimmer can be extra aggressive because he has elite and smart athletes at all three levels of the defense. As a motivator, he'll also be harping on how this unit played in the final six quarters of the 2017 playoffs.

DEFENSIVE LINE: The strength of the team might have gotten stronger with the signing of former Seahawks tackle Sheldon Richardson. The one-year deal will serve as extra motivation for a guy who has the potential to be one of the better three-techniques in the NFL. Linval Joseph remains one of the more powerful and deceptively quick nose tackles in the league. Right end Everson Griffen is an elite pass rusher who also is dedicated to stopping the run. He has also recovered from the plantar fasciitis that bothered him from Week Nine through the end of last season. Left end Danielle Hunter is

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Minnesota head coach Mike Zimmer

Defense comes first for Zimmer. Ball security and field position are a must for the offense. However, as a defensive innovator known for his creative uses of double-A gap fronts, Zimmer also understands he can't win Minnesota's first Super Bowl without scoring at least 24 points a game. Last year, with backup quarterback Case Keenum playing all but six quarters, the Vikings cracked the top 10 in scoring (23.9 ppg). But when it came time to pick a quarterback for this season, Zimmer preferred Kirk Cousins' stronger arm and higher ceiling than the safety of re-signing Keenum, whose lack of ideal arm strength made him a more of a risk.

MINNESOTA **VIKINGS**

a 23-year-old physical marvel with 25.5 career sacks. Brian Robison, a 12-year veteran, provides depth at left end and adds versatility to Zimmer's creative third-down packages as an inside rusher from the two-point stance. Depth inside is a question mark with two of last year's tackles–starter Tom Johnson and Shamar Stephen–now in Seattle.

LINEBACKERS: Former UCLA teammates Eric Kendricks and Anthony Barr are standout three-down linebackers who have played three NFL seasons together and are only 26 years old. If Kendricks leads the team in tackles this year, which is a near certainty if he stays healthy, he will join Rip Hawkins (1961-64) as the only Vikings to do that in each of their first four seasons. He's instinctive, quick and a sure tackler. Barr has All-Pro potential and few weaknesses when motivated. As a 4-3 outside 'backer, he doesn't get as many opportunities for "splash" plays, but he can be a special weapon in Zimmer's double-A gap pressure packages. Ben Gedeon started at weakside in the base defense as a rookie last season. He didn't distinguish himself, but also had limited reps because the Vikings play mostly nickel packages. Depth is a concern here, especially with Kendrick's backup, Kentrell Brothers, having to serve a four-game suspension for testing positive for PEDs.

SECONDARY: The secondary was a weakness before Zimmer arrived in 2014. Last year, it had two first-team All-Pro players in right cornerback Xavier Rhodes and free safety Harrison Smith. Rhodes has grown into one of the league's most gifted and confident shutdown corners. Smith's instincts and versatility make him Zimmer's No. 1 weapon on third-and-long. Smith is excellent at disguising pre-snap looks and then quickly springing something else. Left cornerback Trae Waynes, who made tremendous strides in his first year as a starter, is learning to play Zimmer's tighter coverage techniques. Overachiever Andrew Sendejo will try to hang on to the starting job at strong safety for the fourth straight season. He packs a wallop but lacks speed and turns 31 in September. Nickel back Mackensie Alexander improved in his second season but still lacks consistency, which is a main reason the Vikings used the 30th overall draft pick on UCF cornerback Mike Hughes.

SPECIAL TEAMS: In March, the Vikings re-signed kicker Kai Forbath for one year. A month later, they found his replacement when they took stronger-legged Daniel Carlson of Auburn in the draft. Forbath brought some calm midway through the 2016 season when

No longer is **Kirk Cousins** the plucky overachiever who deserves a long-term deal. He's the record-setting $84 million man. And he's being handed the keys to a team that came within one game of reaching the Super Bowl with career journeyman Case Keenum at quarterback. The pressure is on big-time, Kirk.

Blair Walsh's meltdown forced his release. But Forbath also missed eight PATs in 23 games as a Viking. Carlson made a career-low 74.2 percent (23-for-31) of his field goals last year.

Punter Ryan Quigley had the worst average in the league (42.2 yards per kick) and one of the worst net averages (39.2). He had no touchbacks in 71 regular-season punts, but two in seven playoff punts.

Long snapper Kevin McDermott is back from a shoulder injury that sidelined him late last season. Marcus Sherels is the best punt returner in franchise history. He's steady and sneaky-quick. Hughes, who had three return touchdowns at UCF a year ago, will replace Sherels as the kickoff returner.

BOTTOM LINE

The Vikings will be disappointed with anything less than their first Super Bowl appearance since Jan. 9, 1977. Yes, their vaunted defense was drilled by the Eagles' backup quarterback in their last outing. Yes, the NFC will be even more difficult to win with Carson Wentz and Aaron Rodgers returning from injuries, the Rams stockpiling talent and the South Division looking strong as ever. But the "all-in" approach the Vikings have taken this offseason was a no-holds-barred push to reach the Super Bowl with what they believe is a ready-made franchise quarterback and a defense that's loaded with elite, young and very hungry talent.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B+
2018 STOCKWATCH: OUTPERFORM

THE LAST TIME …

… the Vikings erased a 20-point deficit to win a game was Oct. 4, 1992. Minnesota fell behind the Chicago Bears, 20-0, after three quarters at home. In the final period, Todd Scott intercepted Jim Harbaugh and returned it 35 yards for a touchdown to get the Vikings on the board, and then QB Rich Gannon connected on a 16-yard scoring strike to Cris Carter. **Roger Craig's one-yard TD run completed the comeback and gave Minnesota an improbable 21-20 victory.**

NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **QB** Kirk Cousins
  (free agent, Washington)
- **DT** Sheldon Richardson
  (free agent, Seattle)
- **QB** Trevor Siemian
  (trade, Denver)
- **WR** Kendall Wright
  (free agent, Chicago)
- **OG** Tom Compton
  (free agent, Chicago)

NFL DRAFT

Sheldon Richardson

THE DRAFT REPORT

Bucking the experts who assumed they would take an offensive lineman in the first round, the Vikings remembered their true identity and stockpiled another cornerback with return ability. Central Florida's Mike Hughes adds depth outside while challenging incumbent Mackensie Alexander inside as the nickel slot corner. Hughes also will assume kick-return duties, allowing Marcus Sherels to handle punt returns only. Second-round pick Brian O'Neill will compete to be the starting right tackle. He was one of the draft's more athletic tackles and has played both sides, but the former tight end needs to get stronger. With six picks on Day Three, the Vikings found a new kicker in Auburn's Daniel Carlson while adding depth to both lines, tight end and middle linebacker.

2018 DRAFT GRADE: B

THE VIKINGS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	30	Mike Hughes	DB	5-11	191	21	UCF
2	62	Brian O'Neill	T	6-6	290	22	Pittsburgh
4	102	Jalyn Holmes	DE	6-5	283	22	Ohio State
5	157	Tyler Conklin	TE	6-3	254	22	Central Michigan
5	167	Daniel Carlson	K	6-5	213	23	Auburn
6	213	Colby Gossett	G	6-5	311	23	Appalachian State
6	218	Ade Aruna	DE	6-5	262	24	Tulane
7	225	Devante Downs	LB	6-3	245	22	California

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Mike Zimmer, **Head Coach;** John DeFilippo, **Offensive Coordinator;** George Edwards, **Defensive Coordinator;** Mike Priefer, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
8 Cousins, Kirk	QB	6-3	202	30	7	Michigan State
3 Siemian, Trevor	QB	6-3	220	26	4	Northwestern
1 Sloter, Kyle	QB	6-4	218	24	2	Northern Colorado

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
64 Andrews, Josh	C	6-2	311	27	3	Oregon State
76 Collins, Aviante	T	6-6	295	25	2	TCU
79 Compton, Tom	G	6-5	313	29	6	South Dakota
62 Easton, Nick	G	6-3	303	26	4	Harvard
67 Edison, Cornelius	C	6-3	309	25	3	Portland State
65 Elflein, Pat	C	6-3	303	24	2	Ohio State
69 Hill, Rashod	T	6-6	309	26	3	Southern Miss
63 Isidora, Danny	G	6-3	306	24	2	Miami (Fla.)
78 Joseph, Dieugot	T	6-6	302	24	1	Florida International
68 Lang, Cedrick	T	6-7	269	26	1	UTEP
72 Norton, Storm	T	6-8	306	24	1	Toledo
71 Reiff, Riley	T	6-6	305	29	7	Iowa
74 Remmers, Mike	T	6-5	310	29	6	Oregon State

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
31 Brown, Mack	RB	5-11	213	26	3	Florida
33 Cook, Dalvin	RB	5-11	213	23	2	Florida State
30 Ham, C.J.	FB	5-11	235	25	2	Augustana (S.D.)
25 Murray, Latavius	RB	6-3	230	28	6	UCF

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
81 Bell, Blake	TE	6-6	252	27	4	Oklahoma
13 Coley, Stacy	WR	6-1	195	24	2	Miami (Fla.)
14 Diggs, Stefon	WR	6-0	191	24	4	Maryland
16 Jones, Cayleb	WR	6-2	209	25	2	Arizona
King, Tavarres	WR	6-1	192	28	4	Georgia
89 Morgan, David	TE	6-4	265	25	3	UTSA
87 Price, Josiah	TE	6-4	249	25	1	Michigan State
82 Rudolph, Kyle	TE	6-6	265	28	8	Notre Dame
19 Thielen, Adam	WR	6-2	200	28	5	Minnesota State
11 Treadwell, Laquon	WR	6-2	215	23	3	Ole Miss
17 Wright, Kendall	WR	5-10	185	28	7	Baylor
15 Zylstra, Brandon	WR	6-2	215	25	1	Concordia (Minn.)

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
90 Bower, Tashawn	DE	6-5	250	23	2	LSU
92 Bradley, Dylan	DT	6-1	265	23	1	Southern Miss
97 Griffen, Everson	DE	6-3	273	30	9	USC
99 Hunter, Danielle	DE	6-5	252	23	4	LSU
94 Johnson, Jaleel	DT	6-3	316	24	2	Iowa
98 Joseph, Linval	DT	6-4	329	29	9	East Carolina
66 Lyons, Caushaud	DT	6-5	284	25	1	Tusculum
95 Odenigbo, Ifeadi	DL	6-3	258	24	1	Northwestern
93 Richardson, Sheldon	DT	6-3	295	27	6	Missouri
96 Robison, Brian	DE	6-3	259	35	12	Texas
91 Weatherly, Stephen	DE	6-5	265	24	3	Vanderbilt

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
55 Barr, Anthony	LB	6-5	255	26	5	UCLA
40 Brothers, Kentrell	LB	6-1	242	25	3	Missouri
43 Cliett, Reshard	LB	6-2	222	26	2	South Florida
42 Gedeon, Ben	LB	6-2	244	23	2	Michigan
54 Kendricks, Eric	LB	6-0	232	26	4	UCLA
56 Williams, Antwione	LB	6-3	240	25	2	Georgia Southern
50 Wilson, Eric	LB	6-2	225	23	2	Cincinnati

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
20 Alexander, Mackensie	CB	5-10	192	24	3	Clemson
41 Harris, Anthony	S	6-1	192	26	4	Virginia
27 Kearse, Jayron	S	6-4	215	24	3	Clemson
29 Rhodes, Xavier	CB	6-1	218	28	6	Florida State
38 Richardson, Horace	CB	6-0	212	24	1	SMU
34 Sendejo, Andrew	S	6-1	210	31	8	Rice
35 Sherels, Marcus	CB	5-10	175	30	8	Minnesota
22 Smith, Harrison	S	6-2	214	29	7	Notre Dame
39 Tocho, Jack	S	6-0	202	22	1	N.C. State
26 Waynes, Trae	CB	6-0	190	26	4	Michigan State

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
2 Forbath, Kai	K	5-11	197	31	7	UCLA
48 Dooley, Nick	LS	6-7	270	23	1	UTEP
47 McDermott, Kevin	LS	6-5	240	28	6	UCLA
4 Quigley, Ryan	P	6-3	188	28	6	Boston College

DETROIT
LIONS

Matthew Stafford, QB

STAFFORD: MATT LUDTKE / AP

⬐2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
N.Y. Jets	@ San Francisco	New England	@ Dallas	Green Bay	@ Miami	Seattle	@ Minnesota
Sept. 10 / 7:10 PM	Sept. 16 / 4:05 PM	Sept. 23 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM

2017 RECORD   **OVERALL: 9-7 HOME:** 4-4
CONFERENCE: 8-4 **DIVISION:** 5-1

HEAD COACH   **MATT PATRICIA** (FIRST YEAR)
CAREER RECORD: 0-0

▶ **ONLINE:** www.detroitlions.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @Lions
▶ **TICKETS:** 313-262-2008
▶ **STADIUM:** Ford Field
▶ **CAPACITY:** 65,000
▶ **TURF:** FieldTurf

Expect Lions to roar a good bit louder on defense now that Patricia has control

BY DAVE BIRKETT
Detroit Free Press

The Lions surprised many when they went 9-7 last season and missed their second straight wild-card appearance by literally half a yard. But that wasn't good enough for general manager Bob Quinn. Quinn said he expected more, and he needed a coach he could trust to make that happen.

No one was surprised when Quinn hired his good buddy and former New England Patriots colleague Matt Patricia to replace Jim Caldwell, and the early returns on Patricia have been positive. He's installed a completely new defense with a revamped linebacking corps, and he's made a commitment to a running game that hasn't ranked in the top half of the NFL since Barry Sanders was on the field.

The Lions won't be anyone's Super Bowl pick this year–not with Aaron Rodgers back healthy in Green Bay and the Minnesota Vikings still patrolling the NFC North. But with quarterback Matthew Stafford in his prime, a more reliable rushing attack and a defense that should get a bump from Patricia, this team could surprise this fall.

OFFENSE

One of Patricia's biggest decisions when he was hired was what to do with an offense that was among the highest scoring in the NFL last year. Much to Stafford's delight, he kept Jim Bob Cooter as coordinator but brought a new line coach to switch up running schemes. Cooter evolved as a playcaller in his second full season as coordinator last year. The Lions became more explosive in the downfield passing game but need to be better in short-yardage and red-zone situations.

QUARTERBACKS: Stafford signed a five-year extension last summer that at the time made him the highest-paid player in the NFL. He's nine seasons into a career that's been defined so far by its impressive statistical prowess, but also a lack of playoff success. Still, at just 30 years old, Stafford is in the prime of his career and gives the Lions a reason to believe they can win any game.

Last year, Stafford struggled with turnovers (17, including seven fumbles), though much of that was due to protection issues up front. He has evolved as a passer the last few seasons and is as good as anyone in the NFL late in games. Patricia says he thinks he can help Stafford reach even greater heights by giving him a different perspective on what to expect from defenses on the field.

Stafford is one of the NFL's top ironmen, but if he goes down, either Matt Cassel or Jake Rudock will be waiting in

PREDICTED FINISH NFC NORTH
2

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Matthew Stafford
	Jake Rudock
RB	Kerryon Johnson
	LeGarrette Blount
LT	Taylor Decker
	Tyrell Crosby
LG	Graham Glasgow
	Kenny Wiggins
C	Frank Ragnow
	Graham Glasgow
RG	T.J. Lang
	Joe Dahl
RT	Rick Wagner
	Corey Robinson
TE	Luke Willson
	Levine Toilolo
WR	Golden Tate
	Andy Jones
WR	Marvin Jones Jr.
	TJ Jones
WR	Kenny Golladay
	TJ Jones

DEFENSE

DE	Ziggy Ansah
	Kerry Hyder Jr.
DT	A'Shawn Robinson
	Akeem Spence
DT	Sylvester Williams
	Da'Shawn Hand
DE	Anthony Zettel
	Cornelius Washington
LB	Devon Kennard
	Nick Bellore
LB	Jarrad Davis
	Jonathan Freeny
LB	Christian Jones
	Jalen Reeves-Maybin
CB	Darius Slay
	Teez Tabor
CB	Nevin Lawson
	DeShawn Shead
S	Glover Quin
	Tracy Walker
S	Tavon Wilson
	Quandre Diggs

SPECIALISTS

LS	Don Muhlbach
P	Sam Martin
K	Matt Prater
KR	TJ Jones
PR	Jamal Agnew

BYE: WEEK 6   Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
@ Chicago	Carolina	Chicago	L.A. Rams	@ Arizona	@ Buffalo	Minnesota	@ Green Bay
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 22 / 12:30 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

DETROIT **LIONS**

Ziggy Ansah, DE

⬋5-YEAR WIN TREND
43-37

7-9	11-5	7-9	9-7	9-7
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

the wings.

RUNNING BACKS: The Lions averaged nine yards less rushing per game than any other team in the NFL last year, so it's no surprise they overhauled their backfield this offseason. They traded up to draft Kerryon Johnson, the SEC's Offensive Player of the Year, in the second round, and signed LeGarrette Blount, the leading rusher on the last two Super Bowl champs, in free agency. Those two should provide a nice complement in the backfield.

Theo Riddick should have a role as one of the best pass-catching backs in the NFL, but Ameer Abdullah's future is much less defined coming off a disappointing 2017 season in which he averaged just 3.3 yards per carry and lost his starting job.

The Lions eliminated the fullback from their offense last spring, then drafted one in April, so they should have a power element to their offense again this fall.

RECEIVERS: The Lions don't have a single dominant force in their receiving corps, but collectively they have one of the better trios in the league. Marvin Jones Jr. had his first 1,000-yard season last year and emerged as one of the most dangerous downfield threats in the league. Golden Tate does most of his work underneath, but is good for 90 catches a season. And second-year pro Kenny Golladay showed flashes of greatness in 2017; at 6-4, he can be a handful in the red zone.

Eric Ebron wore out his welcome in Detroit, so the Lions released him in a

cap-saving move this offseason. Luke Willson takes over his spot as the top tight end. He won't stretch the field as much as Ebron, but he should be more reliable and a bigger weapon near the goal line. Don't forget about No. 4 receiver TJ Jones, either. He can play inside or out and had 30 catches last year.

OFFENSIVE LINE: Quinn has invested more resources in the offensive line in his three years as general manager than any other position. He drafted Taylor Decker and Graham Glasgow in 2016, signed Rick Wagner and T.J. Lang as free agents last year, them spent a first-round pick on Frank Ragnow this spring.

The Lions started 11 different combinations on their offensive line last fall, and that led to issues everywhere.

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Lions

"I like the (Matt) Patricia hire. Smart guy. Did more with less in New England. You always wonder about those guys who worked under Bill (Belichick) and how much of a hand they really had in things, but I think he has a chance. ... **(Matt) Stafford** got beat to (expletive) last year. They couldn't protect him at all. (Rick) Wagner wasn't very good and their left tackle got hurt. They had a lot of problems up front. ... They can't run the ball, but he's a good quarterback. I'd take him in a heartbeat. ... I don't know where they'll get any pass rush from. Ziggy (Ansah) hasn't been himself for a couple years now. Who else do they have? ... They didn't have any great rushers in New England after the (Chandler) Jones kid left, so that might fall on Patricia (to scheme it up)."

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	35-23	Arizona Cardinals
09/18	W	24-10	New York Giants
09/24	L	26-30	Atlanta Falcons
10/01	W	14-7	Minnesota Vikings
10/08	L	24-27	Carolina Panthers
10/15	L	38-52	New Orleans Saints
10/29	L	15-20	Pittsburgh Steelers
11/06	W	30-17	Green Bay Packers
11/12	W	38-24	Cleveland Browns
11/19	W	27-24	Chicago Bears
11/23	L	23-30	Minnesota Vikings
12/03	L	20-44	Baltimore Ravens
12/10	W	24-21	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
12/16	W	20-10	Chicago Bears
12/24	L	17-26	Cincinnati Bengals
12/31	W	35-11	Green Bay Packers

2017 RECORD: 9-7

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Abdullah	165	552	3.3	34	4
Riddick	84	286	3.4	21	3
Green	42	165	3.9	33	2
Stafford	29	98	3.4	15	0
D. Washington	20	44	2.2	6	0
Zenner	14	26	1.9	14	1
Tate	5	22	4.4	10	0
Agnew	2	9	4.5	5	0
Redfern	1	10	10.0	10	0
Golladay	1	9	9.0	9	0
DETROIT	363	1,221	3.4	34	10
OPPONENTS	432	1,800	4.2	51	18

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Tate	92	1,003	10.9	71t	5
M. Jones	61	1,101	18.0	58	9
Ebron	53	574	10.8	44	4
Riddick	53	444	8.4	63	2
TJ Jones	30	399	13.3	34	1
Golladay	28	477	17.0	54t	3
Abdullah	25	162	6.5	22	1
Fells	17	177	10.4	23	3
Roberts	4	46	11.5	23	0
Abbrederis	3	44	14.7	25	0
Agnew	2	18	9.0	12	0
Green	2	14	7.0	9	0
D. Washington	2	14	7.0	10	0
Bellore	1	1	1.0	1t	1
Mihalik	1	-4	-4.0	-4	0
DETROIT	374	4,470	12.0	71t	29
OPPONENTS	366	4,120	11.3	97t	21

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Stafford	565	371	4,446	29	10
Rudock	5	3	24	0	1
DETROIT	570	374	4,183	29	11
OPPONENTS	570	366	3,892	21	19

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Agnew	11	196	17.8	25	0
Abdullah	8	179	22.4	29	0
TJ Jones	5	105	21.0	35	0
Zenner	3	62	20.7	23	0
D. Washington	2	31	15.5	18	0
Tate	2	0	0.0	1	0
Fells	1	10	10.0	10	0
DETROIT	32	583	18.2	35	0
OPPONENTS	43	878	20.4	38	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Agnew	29	447	15.4	88t	2
TJ Jones	6	47	7.8	17	0
Tate	2	23	11.5	13	0
DETROIT	37	517	14.0	88t	2
OPPONENTS	26	198	7.6	28	0

SACKS   DETROIT 35.0, OPPONENTS 47.0

Ansah 12.0, Zettel 6.5, Spence 3.0, C. Washington 2.5, Davis 2.0, Ngata 2.0, Wilson 2.0, Diggs 1.0, Valoaga 1.0, Whitehead 1.0, Hayden 0.5, Ledbetter 0.5, Reeves-Maybin 0.5, Robinson 0.5

⬎ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	337.8	13
Rushing	76.3	32
Passing	261.4	6
Scoring	25.6	7
Punt returns	14.0	1
Kick returns	18.2	32
Red zone TD%	56.5	10
Total defense	355.8	27
Against rush	112.5	18
Against pass	243.2	27
Points allowed	23.5	21
Interceptions	19	4t
Sacks	35.0	20
Turnover diff.	+10	5t

With better health, they expect the line to be significantly better this year. Decker was mediocre in his return from a torn labrum, but he's shown great promise at left tackle. Lang was a Pro Bowl alternate last season, though injuries are a concern with him. Ragnow and Glasgow will sort out the starting jobs at left guard and center in training camp, with both players capable of playing either position. The Lions need a better year from Wagner, who was disappointing in 2017.

DEFENSE

Former Syracuse head coach Paul Pasqualoni is the Lions' new defensive coordinator, but make no mistake about it, this is Patricia's defense. The Lions are implementing a New England Patriots-style approach that demands precision and versatility. They won't be a base 4-3 or 3-4, but rather an amoeba-like unit that shifts shape depending on opponent and situation. There's good talent here, with players like defensive end Ziggy Ansah and cornerback Darius Slay, but it's up to Patricia to get the most out of a group that has collectively underachieved.

DEFENSIVE LINE: The biggest move Detroit made this offseason, other than hiring Patricia, was using the franchise tag to keep Ansah in town. Ansah is the only true pass-rushing threat the Lions have on their defensive front, though he's been a ghost for parts of the last two seasons because of injuries.

Anthony Zettel played well in a starting capacity last season and is the type of high-effort player every team wants on its roster. Kerry Hyder Jr., the No. 3 end, is returning from a torn Achilles. At the tackle spots, the Lions signed Sylvester Williams to clog holes in the middle of their line, but they're counting on a big step forward from third-year pro A'Shawn Robinson. Robinson has the potential to be a top-flight run-stopper, and it should help that he's paired again with his old college line coach at Alabama, Bo Davis.

LINEBACKERS: No unit underwent

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Detroit head coach Matt Patricia

Patricia spent the last 14 seasons working for Bill Belichick in New England, so it's no surprise he's trying to install a Patriots-like defense in Detroit. After years of running a standard four-man front, with their main charge getting to the quarterback, the Lions will shift between a one- and two-gap defensive line this fall based on the team they're playing and situations within games. Patricia favors bigger, more physical linebackers, and he believes in building through the middle of the team at nose tackle, linebacker and safety. Offensively, Jim Bob Cooter returns as coordinator, but expect a more balanced approach.

DETROIT **LIONS**

more change this offseason than the linebacking corps. The Lions, in an effort to get bigger and more flexible up front, signed Devon Kennard and Christian Jones on the first day of free agency, cut ties with Tahir Whitehead and plan to expand middle linebacker Jarrad Davis' role in what they hope will be a much-improved group.

Davis was the Lions' second-leading tackler as a rookie, but he had some struggles in pass coverage that caused the team to dial back his snaps last year. He's a football hound, though, so the organization believes he's still headed for great things. Kennard adds a pass-rushing element to the unit, while Jones is a thumper who projects to play on the weakside. Jalen Reeves-Maybin, a fourth-round pick last year, could still have a role in sub-packages because of his abilities in pass coverage.

SECONDARY: Slay tied for the NFL lead and set a career high with eight interceptions last season while emerging as one of the best cornerbacks in the league. Slay and safety Glover Quin headline a group that's deep and better than most people realize.

The Lions ranked among the NFL leaders in interceptions last season despite a putrid pass rush, and they return all five starters plus two young backups in the secondary. Nevin Lawson isn't much of a playmaker, but he should start again at the cornerback spot opposite Slay. Quandre Diggs played well as a slot corner last season before transitioning to safety when Tavon Wilson got hurt, and either he or Wilson will start at the second safety spot this fall. The Lions signed DeShawn Shead in free agency to add size to the secondary, and will try and fit second-year corners Teez Tabor and Jamal Agnew into the playing group.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The Lions are one of the fortunate few in the NFL in

IMPACT NEWCOMER

The Lions' biggest addition in free agency, linebacker **Devon Kennard**, should start at strongside linebacker and add a pass-rushing presence to a unit that head coach Matt Patricia holds near and dear to his heart. He had 4.0 sacks with the Giants last season and could have a few more this year as an every-down player.

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Lions recorded three straight winning seasons was 1993-95. Hall-of-Fame running back **Barry Sanders** helped lead Detroit to a 29-19 record and three playoff berths under coach Wayne Fontes, although the Lions failed to win a playoff game in any of those seasons. This year, new coach Matt Patricia takes over a Detroit team coming off back-to-back 9-7 campaigns.

that they don't have to think twice about their kicking game. Punter Sam Martin is coming off a disappointing season, but his struggles can be attributed to a summer foot injury that forced him to open the year on the PUP list. Kicker Matt Prater drilled seven field goals of 50-plus yards last season and has shown no signs of slowing down at age 33. And the Lions have good coverage units because of an investment in good special-teams players.

Agnew was the Lions' most pleasant draft surprise in 2017. He scored two punt-return touchdowns and emerged as one of the most electric returners in the league. The Lions do need to do a better job on kick returns, and that task could fall to a player like Abdullah or TJ Jones this fall.

BOTTOM LINE

The Lions won't be expected to win the NFC North this year, nor should they be, but they're good enough to beat any team on their schedule. Stafford is as tough as they come, he's got a diverse group of weapons around him and there's enough talent on defense to believe that unit can be better. If Patricia can fix some of the game-management issues that have plagued them in the past, and if the running game can finally be respectable, there's no reason the Lions shouldn't contend for a playoff spot.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B
2018 STOCKWATCH: OUTPERFORM

⬎ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **LB** Christian Jones
  (free agent, Chicago)
- **LB** Devon Kennard
  (free agent, N.Y. Giants)
- **TE** Luke Willson
  (free agent, Seattle)
- **RB** LeGarrette Blount
  (free agent, Philadelphia)
- **CB** DeShawn Shead
  (free agent, Seattle)
- **DT** Sylvester Williams
  (free agent, Tennessee)

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Lions made a concerted effort to improve their NFL-worst rushing attack in the draft. They took Arkansas center **Frank Ragnow** in Round One, traded up to get Auburn running back Kerryon Johnson in Round Two and added another offensive lineman (Tyrell Crosby) and a fullback (Nick Bawden) on Day Three. Both Ragnow and Johnson should play big roles this fall. Lions general manager Bob Quinn said he was sick of seeing his team struggle in short-yardage and goal-line situations, and he and head coach Matt Patricia agree the team needed to get tougher. Ragnow and Johnson will help in both areas after star-studded careers in the SEC. One drawback? The Lions didn't do enough to help their pass rush.

2018 DRAFT GRADE: B

Luke Willson

⬎ THE LIONS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	20	Frank Ragnow	OL	6-5	317	22	Arkansas
2	43	Kerryon Johnson	RB	6-0	213	21	Auburn
3	82	Tracy Walker	DB	6-1	206	23	Louisiana
4	114	Da'Shawn Hand	DT	6-4	297	22	Alabama
5	153	Tyrell Crosby	T	6-5	309	22	Oregon
7	237	Nick Bawden	FB	6-2	245	22	San Diego State

⬎ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Matt Patricia, **Head Coach;** Jim Bob Cooter, **Offensive Coordinator;** Paul Pasqualoni, **Defensive Coordinator;** Joe Marciano, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
8	Cassel, Matt	QB	6-4	225	36	14	USC
14	Rudock, Jake	QB	6-3	212	25	3	Michigan
9	Stafford, Matthew	QB	6-3	220	30	10	Georgia

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
66	Dahl, Joe	G	6-4	305	25	2	Washington State
68	Decker, Taylor	T	6-7	311	25	3	Ohio State
60	Glasgow, Graham	G	6-6	310	26	3	Michigan
73	Johnson, Wesley	C	6-5	309	27	5	Vanderbilt
75	Koloamatangi, Leo	C	6-5	305	24	1	Hawaii
76	Lang, T.J.	G	6-4	315	30	10	Eastern Michigan
72	Mihalik, Brian	T	6-9	315	26	3	Boston College
70	Robinson, Corey	T	6-7	317	26	4	South Carolina
74	Skipper, Dan	T	6-9	317	23	1	Arkansas
71	Wagner, Rick	T	6-6	315	28	6	Wisconsin
79	Wiggins, Kenny	G	6-6	330	30	5	Fresno State

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
21	Abdullah, Ameer	RB	5-9	203	25	4	Nebraska
29	Blount, LeGarrette	RB	6-0	247	31	9	Oregon
38	Green, Tion	RB	6-0	220	24	2	Cincinnati
25	Riddick, Theo	RB	5-9	201	27	6	Notre Dame
36	Washington, Dwayne	RB	6-2	223	24	3	Washington
34	Zenner, Zach	RB	5-11	221	26	4	South Dakota State

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
85	Barnes, Brandon	TE	6-5	260	24	1	Alabama State
16	Billingsley, Jace	WR	5-9	189	25	1	Eastern Oregon
83	Ford, Dontez	WR	6-2	210	24	1	Pittsburgh
19	Golladay, Kenny	WR	6-4	213	24	2	Northern Illinois
17	Jones, Andy	WR	6-1	215	24	1	Jacksonville
11	Jones Jr., Marvin	WR	6-2	198	28	7	California
13	Jones, TJ	WR	6-0	190	26	4	Notre Dame
12	Marquez, Bradley	WR	5-10	230	25	4	Texas Tech
80	Roberts, Michael	TE	6-5	265	24	2	Toledo
15	Tate, Golden	WR	5-10	197	30	9	Notre Dame
87	Toilolo, Levine	TE	6-8	268	27	6	Stanford
84	Valles, Hakeem	TE	6-3	250	25	2	Monmouth
82	Willson, Luke	TE	6-5	251	28	6	Rice

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
94	Ansah, Ziggy	DE	6-5	275	29	6	BYU
58	Barrett, Alex	DE	6-3	260	24	1	San Diego State
61	Hyder Jr., Kerry	DE	6-2	270	27	3	Texas Tech
57	Johnson, Cam	DE	6-4	272	28	4	Virginia
63	Johnson, Toby	DT	6-4	320	27	1	Georgia
98	Ledbetter, Jeremiah	DT	6-3	295	24	2	Arkansas
99	Ringo, Christian	DT	6-1	298	26	3	Louisiana
91	Robinson, A'Shawn	DT	6-4	322	23	3	Alabama
97	Spence, Akeem	DT	6-1	307	26	6	Illinois
78	Valoaga, Jeremiah	DE	6-6	275	23	2	UNLV
90	Washington, Cornelius	DE	6-4	280	28	6	Georgia
92	Williams, Sylvester	DT	6-2	328	29	6	North Carolina
69	Zettel, Anthony	DE	6-4	270	26	3	Penn State

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
43	Bellore, Nick	LB	6-1	250	29	8	Central Michigan
53	Chubb, Brandon	LB	6-1	245	24	2	Wake Forest
40	Davis, Jarrad	LB	6-1	238	23	2	Florida
55	Freeny, Jonathan	LB	6-2	245	29	7	Rutgers
52	Jones, Christian	LB	6-3	244	27	5	Florida State
42	Kennard, Devon	LB	6-4	256	27	5	USC
54	Longa, Steve	LB	6-0	240	23	2	Rutgers
44	Reeves-Maybin, Jalen	LB	6-0	230	23	2	Tennessee

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
39	Agnew, Jamal	CB	5-10	190	23	2	San Diego
28	Diggs, Quandre	DB	5-9	200	25	4	Texas
35	Killebrew, Miles	S	6-2	222	25	3	Southern Utah
24	Lawson, Nevin	CB	5-9	192	27	5	Utah State
30	McClure, Stefan	S	5-11	205	25	2	California
41	Milligan, Rolan	S	5-10	200	24	1	Toledo
46	Pringle, Raysean	DB	6-0	180	25	1	Southern Utah
27	Quin, Glover	S	6-0	207	32	10	New Mexico
26	Shead, DeShawn	CB	6-2	216	29	7	Portland State
23	Slay, Darius	CB	6-0	190	27	6	Mississippi State
31	Tabor, Teez	CB	6-0	201	22	2	Florida
45	Washington, Charles	S	5-10	192	25	2	Fresno State
32	Wilson, Tavon	S	6-0	212	28	7	Illinois

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
6	Martin, Sam	P	6-1	211	28	6	Appalachian State
48	Muhlbach, Don	LS	6-4	258	37	15	Texas A&M
5	Prater, Matt	K	5-10	201	34	12	UCF

GREEN BAY
PACKERS

Aaron Rodgers, QB

RODGERS: MATT LUDTKE / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 8	Week 9
Chicago	Minnesota	@ Washington	Buffalo	@ Detroit	San Francisco	@ L.A. Rams	@ New England
Sept. 9 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 15 / 8:15 PM	Oct. 28 / 4:25 PM	Nov. 4 / 8:20 PM

Packers will go as far as quarterback Aaron Rodgers' health will allow them to

BY TOM SILVERSTEIN
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

That ticking sound you hear coming out of 1265 Lambeau Avenue is the time clock on quarterback Aaron Rodgers' career.

The future Hall-of-Fame quarterback was 27 years old when he won a Super Bowl ring, but the years have passed quickly and he is set to turn 35 in December. He missed half of last season with a broken right collarbone and for the first time since 2008 the Packers missed the playoffs.

The offseason was full of change.

General manager Ted Thompson was cast aside in favor of Brian Gutekunst, one of Thompson's lieutenants in the personnel department. Coordinators Dom Capers and Edgar Bennett were fired and replace with a pair of former head coaches, Mike Pettine and Joe Philbin.

The entire organization has gone through a makeover and the question looming this season is whether it will produce a Super Bowl result. A lot of things are going to have to come together for that to happen and it might not be until 2019 that the team finds its footing again.

PREDICTED FINISH NFC NORTH 3

OFFENSE

Head coach Mike McCarthy brought back his close friend Philbin in hopes of getting back to the offensive success the two had when they were last together in 2011. They sat down with the rest of the offensive staff and deconstructed the playbook, starting with the very basics and rebuilding the scheme page by page. Expect Philbin to have a lot of influence on the blocking scheme and the run game, the latter of which McCarthy has neglected at times.

QUARTERBACKS: Even before he got hurt, Rodgers hadn't hit his stride and was transitioning from Jordy Nelson to Davante Adams as his No. 1 receiver. When Anthony Barr drove him into the turf at U.S. Bank Stadium in Week Six, the offense was just starting to find itself.

Rodgers insists he won't hesitate to stray outside the pocket despite that being where Barr got to him, but he's going to have to be smart about his scrambling. There have been no signs of Rodgers losing anything on his fastball or his ability to outrun defenders. He insists his shoulder is fine, but it's important to remember he has broken both collarbones now and might not be as invincible as he once was.

If something does happen to Rodgers, the Packers could be in big trouble again. Brett Hundley was a disaster despite McCarthy's over-the-top support and

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Aaron Rodgers**
	DeShone Kizer
FB	**Aaron Ripkowski**
RB	**Aaron Jones**
	Jamaal Williams
LT	**David Bakhtiari**
	Jason Spriggs
LG	**Lane Taylor**
	Lucas Patrick
C	**Corey Linsley**
	Lucas Patrick
RG	**Justin McCray**
	Adam Pankey
RT	**Kyle Murphy**
	Jason Spriggs
TE	**Jimmy Graham**
	Lance Kendricks
WR	**Davante Adams**
	Geronimo Allison
WR	**Randall Cobb**
	Trevor Davis

DEFENSE

DE	**Mike Daniels**
	Montravius Adams
NT	**Kenny Clark**
	Muhammad Wilkerson
DE	**Muhammad Wilkerson**
	Dean Lowry
OLB	**Nick Perry**
	Kyler Fackrell
ILB	**Blake Martinez**
	Jake Ryan
ILB	**Jake Ryan**
	Oren Burks
OLB	**Clay Matthews**
	Vince Biegel
CB	**Tramon Williams**
	Josh Jackson
CB	**Kevin King**
	Jaire Alexander
S	**Kentrell Brice**
	Josh Jones
S	**Ha Ha Clinton-Dix**
	Marwin Evans

SPECIALISTS

LS	**Zach Triner**
P	**Justin Vogel**
K	**Mason Crosby**
KR	**Trevor Davis**
PR	**Jaire Alexander**

BYE: WEEK 7 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Miami	@ Seattle	@ Minnesota	Arizona	Atlanta	@ Chicago	@ N.Y. Jets	Detroit
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 15 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 25 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

GREEN BAY **PACKERS**

Davante Adams, WR

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
47-32-1

PL	PL	PL	PL	

8-7-1	12-4	10-6	10-6	7-9
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

Gutekunst obviously wasn't satisfied because he acquired Cleveland's DeShone Kizer in a trade for cornerback Damarious Randall. Hundley and Kizer, both mobile quarterbacks like Rodgers, will battle for the No. 2 job.

RUNNING BACKS: There's no telling what rookie Aaron Jones might have done had he stayed healthy. He was on pace for 1,327 yards and had more 20-yard runs per carry than New Orleans' Alvin Kamara. But twice he suffered MCL sprains and his focus in the offseason has been on strengthening his legs so he can better withstand the hits he's taking.

It took a while for Jamaal Williams to come around, but by season's end he was pounding the ball through traffic and getting some big first downs. Missing from his game were big runs–he only had one game in which he had a run of 20 or more yards–so he's got to find a balance between protecting the football with two arms and running looser.

Veteran Ty Montgomery can't be counted on to stay healthy and will be a situational player. Second-year pro Devante Mays is powerful and built low but has a lot of ground to make up. Expect Aaron Ripkowski to remain the lone fullback.

RECEIVERS: Nelson was let go and Adams, who signed a four-year, $58 million contract at the end of last season, is the official No. 1. He was terrific even when Hundley wasn't and somehow managed to catch 10 touchdown passes. The No. 2 guy will be free-agent tight end Jimmy Graham, who signed a three-year, $30 million deal, telling reporters he took less money in Green Bay so he could play with Rodgers.

Graham will be more of a receiver than a tight end and will see a lot of time with Adams and Randall Cobb in the lineup. There aren't any other sure things and someone from among Geronimo Allison, Trevor Davis, Michael Clark and tight end Lance Kendricks is going to have to emerge. It wouldn't be surprising to see Gutekunst add a veteran later in the summer.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The left side of the line is in good shape with David Bakhtiari at tackle, Lane Taylor at guard and Corey Linsley at center. But the right side has a lot of question marks with tackles Bryan Bulaga (ACL), Kyle Murphy (foot) and Jason Spriggs (dislocated kneecap) coming back from injury. It would be a mistake to completely write off Bulaga, but with a $7.9 million cap number he might be let go before the start of the season.

Justin McCray was a savior last year, filling in at every position but center, and

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Packers

"This draft is important for them. I find it hard to say that it will define **Brian (Gutekunst)** or make or break him, but they do need some help, though. Green Bay has their quarterback, but no one to get after the opponent's quarterback. You can talk coverage all you want, but they need to hit on a pass rusher. They will have leads; they need to get the opposing quarterback on the ground. There's flexibility to do a lot in Mike Pettine's defense. It has 3-4 and 4-3 principles. History tells you they like to pressure."

Green Bay Packers president Mark Murphy, right, and general manager Brian Gutekunst.

Mike Daniels
5.0 sacks

2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	17-9	Seattle Seahawks
09/17	L	23-34	Atlanta Falcons
09/24	W	27-24	Cincinnati Bengals
09/28	W	35-14	Chicago Bears
10/08	W	35-31	Dallas Cowboys
10/15	L	10-23	Minnesota Vikings
10/22	L	17-26	New Orleans Saints
11/06	L	17-30	Detroit Lions
11/12	W	23-16	Chicago Bears
11/19	L	0-23	Baltimore Ravens
11/26	L	28-31	Pittsburgh Steelers
12/03	W	26-20	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
12/10	W	27-21	Cleveland Browns
12/17	L	24-31	Carolina Panthers
12/23	L	0-16	Minnesota Vikings
12/31	L	11-35	Detroit Lions
2017 RECORD: 7-9			

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Williams	153	556	3.6	25	4
A. Jones	81	448	5.5	46t	4
Montgomery	71	273	3.8	37t	3
Hundley	36	270	7.5	24	2
A. Rodgers	24	126	5.3	18	0
Cobb	9	17	1.9	10	0
Ripkowski	5	13	2.6	4	0
Mays	4	1	0.3	2	0
Davis	2	13	6.5	9	0
Whitehead	1	7	7.0	7	0
GREEN BAY	**386**	**1,724**	**4.5**	**46t**	**13**
OPPONENTS	**464**	**1,793**	**3.9**	**37**	**10**

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Adams	74	885	12.0	55t	10
Cobb	66	653	9.9	46	4
Nelson	53	482	9.1	58	6
Williams	25	262	10.5	54t	2
Bennett	24	233	9.7	33	0
Allison	23	253	11.0	72	0
Montgomery	23	173	7.5	23	1
Kendricks	18	203	11.3	51	1
R. Rodgers	12	160	13.3	36	1
A. Jones	9	22	2.4	9	0
Ripkowski	7	39	5.6	12	0
Davis	5	70	14.0	29	0
M. Clark	4	41	10.3	19	0
Mays	3	0	0.0	1	0
Byrd	2	31	15.5	29	0
Janis	2	12	6.0	12	0
Hundley	1	10	10.0	10	0
Kerridge	1	3	3.0	3	0
GREEN BAY	**352**	**3,532**	**10.0**	**72**	**25**
OPPONENTS	**348**	**4,041**	**11.6**	**71t**	**30**

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Hundley	316	192	1,836	9	12
A. Rodgers	238	154	1,675	16	6
Callahan	7	5	11	0	0
Cobb	1	1	10	0	0
GREEN BAY	**562**	**352**	**3,167**	**25**	**18**
OPPONENTS	**513**	**348**	**3,789**	**30**	**11**

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Davis	31	707	22.8	34	0
Janis	3	43	14.3	17	0
Fackrell	1	11	11.0	11	0
GREEN BAY	**35**	**761**	**21.7**	**34**	**0**
OPPONENTS	**30**	**665**	**22.2**	**43**	**0**

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Davis	24	289	12.0	65	0
Allison	1	0	0.0	0	0
Brown	1	0	0.0	0	0
Whitehead	1	0	0.0	0	0
GREEN BAY	**27**	**289**	**10.7**	**65**	**0**
OPPONENTS	**29**	**164**	**5.7**	**28**	**0**

SACKS GREEN BAY 37.0, OPPONENTS 51.0

Matthews 7.5, Perry 7.0, Daniels 5.0, K. Clark 4.5, Fackrell 3.0, J. Jones 2.0, Lowry 2.0, Brooks 1.5, Gilbert 1.0, House 1.0, Martinez 1.0, Ryan 1.0, Thomas 0.5

2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	305.7	26
Rushing	107.8	17
Passing	197.9	25
Scoring	20.0	21
Punt returns	10.7	2
Kick returns	21.7	15
Red zone TD%	61.9	4
Total defense	348.9	22
Against rush	112.1	17
Against pass	236.8	23
Points allowed	24.0	26
Interceptions	11	20t
Sacks	37.0	17t
Turnover diff.	-3	20t

he is a candidate to start at right guard. But McCarthy needs to try to do better and he'll give Murphy and the rookies every chance to replace departed veteran Jahri Evans at right guard.

When everyone was healthy last year, the quarterback was well-protected.

DEFENSE

McCarthy could never get himself to admit Capers wasn't getting the job done until he needed him the most last season. In Pettine, he has someone similarly dedicated to a pressure scheme, but it shouldn't be nearly as predictable. Pettine and Rex Ryan built this defense in New York and those who have played in it have said it will require football-savvy players who can carry out the many different pre-snap looks Pettine uses to confuse quarterbacks.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Unable to land a premier edge rusher in the draft, Gutekunst put his money on free-agent addition Muhammad Wilkerson leading the interior pass rush. Defensive tackle Mike Daniels is going to have to be a lot more disciplined in Pettine's scheme, but with the former Jet Wilkerson there to show him what it takes to make it work, he might be more consistent.

Third-year nose tackle Kenny Clark appears headed for stardom after a terrific second season in which he had 4.5 sacks in the last five games. He's just 22 years old and should grow exponentially as his body matures. If Pettine can get something out of Montravius Adams, whose rookie season was spoiled by a broken foot, he could have the makings of a very good defensive line. Throw in Dean Lowry and there's a lot to work with on this unit.

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Green Bay head coach Mike McCarthy

McCarthy likes consistency and sometimes it is to his detriment. It took him way too long to fire defensive coordinator Dom Capers and make other changes on the staff. But that same steadfastness keeps his team even-keeled and afloat during the worst of times. He is tied with Sean Payton for the third-longest tenure among current NFL head coaches and things were getting stale. Hiring new coordinators Mike Pettine and Joe Philbin will inject some fresh ideas into the operation.

GREEN BAY **PACKERS**

LINEBACKERS: It might be something to see if Clay Matthews and Nick Perry were ever able to play injury-free. But it's just not going to happen.

Matthews, 32, had a much better 2017 season than people gave him credit for, but injuries have limited the number of "splash" plays he makes. At some point, the team might be better served having him play inside. Perry is the team's best pass rusher and had 7.0 sacks last year, but he missed four games and played with a broken hand, a sprained foot and a sprained shoulder.

The coaches need at least one of a trio of young players—Kyler Fackrell, Vince Biegel and Reggie Gilbert—to emerge. Fackrell is a long-levered athlete who with a good year in the weight room could start to be a factor. Gilbert may be the most natural pass rusher of the bunch.

Inside, Blake Martinez will continue to man the middle. He tied for the NFL lead in tackles last year and started to grow into a leadership role. Jake Ryan is slotted next to him, but Pettine will use rookie Oren Burks in nickel and dime situations.

SECONDARY: Gutekunst re-signed Davon House and brought back former Packers starter Tramon Williams, but the future is in Kevin King, Jaire Alexander and Josh Jackson, three youngsters who may be in the lineup sooner than later.

More than likely, King will be a starter. He took his lumps as a rookie, but he never could play his best because of a shoulder injury that was surgically repaired in the offseason. He loves press coverage and has the length to really disrupt routes plus the speed to recover if he doesn't. First-round draft pick Alexander, who ran a 4.38 40-yard dash at the Combine, will compete for the slot with Lenzy Pipkins, while Josh Hawkins and Donatello Brown will have trouble making the team.

Safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix followed up a Pro Bowl season with a dud and needs to find his way in Pettine's defense. He claimed he had to play deep all season and wasn't in position to make plays, but that hasn't stopped other safeties from having an impact. Josh Jones blew assignments and had very little impact overall last year. But he's an athletic wonder and will get a chance to redeem himself.

Don't be surprised if Kentrell Brice works his way into the starting lineup. His football knowledge is excellent and he can run. He just has to play better angles and stop going for kill shots all the time. It's possible corner Quinten Rollins could be moved to safety.

SPECIAL TEAMS: When your biggest concern is a long snapper, then

Aaron Rodgers loves a tight end who can get downfield and you can bet **Jimmy Graham** is someone he'll target a lot. It's possible Graham will be the team's leading receiver. During Jared Cook's one season in Green Bay, the offense really clicked, but with someone the caliber of Graham splitting the safeties, the field should open up for Davante Adams, Randall Cobb and the rest of Rodgers' targets.

you're doing fine. Kicker Mason Crosby didn't have his best season (15-for-19 on field goals), but considering the revolving door at long snapper, he deserves a bit of a break. In his rookie season, punter Justin Vogel broke the franchise record for net average (41.6 yards per boot) and will shoot for more consistency this season.

The return game depended upon receiver Davis, one of the fastest guys on the team, and too often he made bad decisions, especially on punt returns. However, he showed breakaway ability, averaging 12.0 yards per runback, and will compete with Alexander for the job.

Losing receiver Jeff Janis will hurt the excellent punt-coverage unit, but of more importance is finding someone who can snap to Crosby and Vogel. Zach Triner will get first crack, but veteran Brett Goode will be on speed dial once again.

BOTTOM LINE

The Packers seem better equipped to challenge for a Super Bowl title in 2019 than this year. Their season may hinge more on the contribution of their 2017 draft class than the '18 group, and the two classes may need another year to get this team back into title contention. There isn't enough playmaking depth on offense or certainty on defense to win the division, let alone make a playoff run.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B-
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Packers had a player lead the NFL in rushing yards was 1962. **Hall-of-Fame running back Jim Taylor rushed for 1,474 yards and a league-leading 19 touchdowns** to help propel coach Vince Lombardi and the Packers to a 13-1 record and their second consecutive NFL championship with a 16-7 victory over the New York Giants. Taylor was also named league MVP in 1962.

TAYLOR: AP PHOTO; GRAHAM: ELAINE THOMPSON / AP

NEW ARRIVALS

- **DL** Muhammad Wilkerson
  (free agent, N.Y. Jets)
- **TE** Jimmy Graham
  (free agent, Seattle)
- **CB** Tramon Williams
  (free agent, Arizona)
- **QB** DeShone Kizer
  (trade, Cleveland)

Muhammad Wilkerson

THE DRAFT REPORT

Brian Gutekunst coaxed two cornerbacks and a 2019 first-round pick out of the first two days of the draft, which was a home run for a first-time general manager. But expecting either Jaire Alexander or Josh Jackson to have an impact right away is a stretch. Coupled with the addition of linebacker Oren Burks, Gutekunst added a ton of athletic ability that should shine through eventually. But he didn't get Aaron Rodgers a top-shelf receiver and didn't do much of anything to improve the pass rush. He did create a lot of competition with all those selections and improved the team's overall athleticism.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
B

THE PACKERS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	18	Jaire Alexander	CB	5-11	190	21	Louisville
2	45	Josh Jackson	CB	6-0	190	22	Iowa
3	88	Oren Burks	LB	6-3	235	23	Vanderbilt
4	133	J'Mon Moore	WR	6-3	205	22	Missouri
5	138	Cole Madison	G	6-5	308	23	Washington State
5	172	JK Scott	P	6-5	208	22	Alabama
5	174	Marquez Valdes-Scantling	WR	6-4	206	23	South Florida
6	207	Equanimeous St. Brown	WR	6-5	214	21	Notre Dame
7	232	James Looney	DL	6-2	287	23	California
7	239	Hunter Bradley	LS	6-2	241	24	Mississippi State
7	248	Kendall Donnerson	LB	6-3	249	22	Southeast Missouri

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Mike McCarthy, **Head Coach;** Joe Philbin, **Offensive Coordinator;** Mike Pettine, **Defensive Coordinator;** Ron Zook, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
6	Callahan, Joe	QB	6-1	216	25	3	Wesley
7	Hundley, Brett	QB	6-3	226	25	4	UCLA
9	Kizer, DeShone	QB	6-4	235	22	2	Notre Dame
12	Rodgers, Aaron	QB	6-2	225	34	14	California

OFFENSIVE LINE
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
79	Amichia, Kofi	G	6-3	304	24	1	South Florida
69	Bakhtiari, David	T	6-4	310	26	6	Colorado
75	Bulaga, Bryan	T	6-5	314	29	9	Iowa
54	Day, Dillon	C	6-4	296	26	1	Mississippi State
63	Linsley, Corey	C	6-3	301	27	5	Ohio State
64	McCray, Justin	G	6-3	317	26	2	UCF
68	Murphy, Kyle	T	6-6	305	24	3	Stanford
77	Pankey, Adam	G/T	6-5	313	24	2	West Virginia
62	Patrick, Lucas	G	6-3	313	25	2	Duke
78	Spriggs, Jason	T	6-6	301	24	3	Indiana
65	Taylor, Lane	G	6-3	324	28	6	Oklahoma State

RUNNING BACKS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
34	Bouagnon, Joel	RB	6-2	230	24	1	Northern Illinois
33	Jones, Aaron	RB	5-9	208	23	2	UTEP
40	Kerridge, Joe	FB	6-0	245	25	3	Michigan
32	Mays, Devante	RB	5-10	230	24	2	Utah State
88	Montgomery, Ty	RB	6-0	216	25	4	Stanford
22	Ripkowski, Aaron	FB	6-1	246	25	4	Oklahoma
30	Williams, Jamaal	RB	6-0	213	23	2	BYU

RECEIVERS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
17	Adams, Davante	WR	6-1	215	25	5	Fresno State
81	Allison, Geronimo	WR	6-3	202	24	3	Illinois
86	Byrd, Emanuel	TE	6-2	240	23	1	Marshall
89	Clark, Michael	WR	6-6	217	22	1	Marshall
18	Cobb, Randall	WR	5-10	192	28	8	Kentucky
11	Davis, Trevor	WR	6-1	188	25	3	California
80	Graham, Jimmy	TE	6-7	265	31	9	Miami (Fla.)
84	Kendricks, Lance	TE	6-3	250	30	8	Wisconsin
16	Kumerow, Jake	WR	6-4	209	26	1	Wisconsin-Whitewater
13	Pearson, Colby	WR	6-0	194	23	1	BYU
85	Tonyan, Robert	TE	6-5	237	24	1	Indiana State
10	Yancey, DeAngelo	WR	6-1	220	23	1	Purdue

DEFENSIVE LINE
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
90	Adams, Montravius	DT	6-4	304	23	2	Auburn
97	Clark, Kenny	DT	6-3	314	22	3	UCLA
76	Daniels, Mike	DT	6-0	310	29	7	Iowa
94	Lowry, Dean	DE	6-6	296	24	3	Northwestern
96	Wilkerson, Muhammad	DL	6-4	315	28	8	Temple

LINEBACKERS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
45	Biegel, Vince	LB	6-3	246	25	2	Wisconsin
51	Fackrell, Kyler	LB	6-5	245	26	3	Utah State
93	Gilbert, Reggie	LB	6-3	261	25	1	Arizona
50	Martinez, Blake	LB	6-2	237	24	3	Stanford
52	Matthews, Clay	LB	6-3	255	32	10	USC
98	Odom, Chris	LB	6-4	262	23	2	Arkansas State
53	Perry, Nick	LB	6-3	265	28	7	USC
47	Ryan, Jake	LB	6-2	240	26	4	Michigan
56	Thomas, Ahmad	LB	6-0	220	23	1	Oklahoma

DEFENSIVE BACKS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
29	Brice, Kentrell	S	5-11	200	24	3	Louisiana Tech
44	Brown, Donatello	CB	6-0	190	27	2	Valdosta State
21	Clinton-Dix, Ha Ha	S	6-1	208	25	5	Alabama
25	Evans, Marwin	S	5-11	211	25	3	Utah State
39	Goodson, Demetri	CB	5-11	197	29	5	Baylor
28	Hawkins, Josh	CB	5-10	189	25	3	East Carolina
31	House, Davon	CB	6-0	195	29	8	New Mexico State
27	Jones, Josh	S	6-2	220	23	2	N.C. State
20	King, Kevin	CB	6-3	200	23	2	Washington
41	Pipkins, Lenzy	CB	6-0	196	24	2	Oklahoma State
24	Rollins, Quinten	CB	5-11	195	26	4	Miami (Ohio)
26	Waters, Herb	CB	6-0	188	25	2	Miami (Fla.)
35	Whitehead, Jermaine	S	5-11	195	25	2	Auburn
38	Williams, Tramon	CB	5-11	191	35	12	Louisiana Tech

SPECIALISTS
			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
2	Crosby, Mason	K	6-1	207	34	12	Colorado
57	Triner, Zach	LS	6-2	247	27	1	Assumption
8	Vogel, Justin	P	6-4	219	24	2	Miami (Fla.)

CHICAGO
BEARS

Mitchell Trubisky, QB

TRUBISKY: CHARLES REX ARBOGAST / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
@ Green Bay	Seattle	@ Arizona	Tampa Bay	@ Miami	New England	N.Y. Jets	@ Buffalo
Sept. 9 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 17 / 8:15 PM	Sept. 23 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM

2017 RECORD   **OVERALL:** 5-11 **HOME:** 3-5
CONFERENCE: 1-11 **DIVISION:** 0-6

HEAD COACH   **MATT NAGY** (FIRST YEAR)
CAREER RECORD: 0-0

▶ **ONLINE:** www.chicagobears.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @ChicagoBears
▶ **TICKETS:** 847-615-BEAR
▶ **STADIUM:** Soldier Field
▶ **CAPACITY:** 61,500
▶ **TURF:** Grass

The Bears are trying to shake their old–school ways under innovative new coach Nagy

BY GENE CHAMBERLAIN
Tribune Media

New Chicago Bears coach Matt Nagy understands the enormous task before second-year quarterback Mitchell Trubisky.

"You come in last year as a rookie and you're asked to lead guys–that's a hard deal sometimes," Nagy says. "Now it's Year Two. It's time to make the next step."

It's a huge step for Trubisky and also for Nagy, the former Kansas City Chiefs offensive coordinator.

A popular narrative makes the Bears this year's 2017 Rams, with a sharp, young offense-minded coach and ascending second-year quarterback. What Sean McVay and Jared Goff achieved in L.A. is a tough act to follow, though.

With defense and a running game in place–and a receiving corps rebuilt in free agency–Trubisky has support.

But general manager Ryan Pace has stockpiled insufficient talent and depth to challenge NFC North powers Green Bay, Minnesota and Detroit.

Even if Trubisky makes a leap, it may not be enough to clear this chasm.

OFFENSE

At least in approach, the Bears left the

1990s behind and advanced decidedly closer to the modern age with Nagy and offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich. They'll use a potent West Coast blend with collegiate concepts, including a heavy emphasis on the run-pass option (RPO). Helfrich established a reputation for innovation as Oregon's head coach. Unpredictability and multiple dimensions replace former head coach John Fox's outdated style.

QUARTERBACKS: Trubisky owns a head start in development considering his 12 games last year when he wasn't expected to play. He's made only 25 starts since high school but already understands the speed and nuances of the NFL. It's an edge Trubisky needs while learning a second offense in two seasons. It's an offense suited to his mobility and is one similar to what he ran at North Carolina. Trubisky can execute the read-option or throw while moving, much as Alex Smith did for Nagy in Kansas City. Receiver talent is thin but more closely resembles NFL standards now, so Trubisky's touch and arm strength should become apparent.

Beyond Trubisky, the quarterback emphasis is on system knowledge. Undersized Chase Daniel spent three years with Nagy in Kansas City. An eight-year veteran, he's thrown only 78 NFL passes. Another former Chief, Tyler Bray, has thrown one NFL pass.

4 PREDICTED FINISH NFC NORTH

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Mitchell Trubisky
	Chase Daniel
RB	Jordan Howard
	Tarik Cohen
LT	Charles Leno Jr.
	Bradley Sowell
LG	Cody Whitehair
	Eric Kush
C	James Daniels
	Hroniss Grasu
RG	Kyle Long
	Jordan Morgan
RT	Bobby Massie
	Will Pericak
TE	Trey Burton
	Dion Sims
WR	Allen Robinson
	Kevin White
WR	Taylor Gabriel
	Bennie Fowler
WR	Joshua Bellamy
	Kevin White

DEFENSE
DE	Akiem Hicks
	Roy Robertson-Harris
NT	Eddie Goldman
	John Jenkins
DE	Jonathan Bullard
	Rashaad Coward
OLB	Aaron Lynch
	Isaiah Irving
ILB	Danny Trevathan
	Nick Kwiatkoski
ILB	Roquan Smith
	John Timu
OLB	Leonard Floyd
	Howard Jones
CB	Prince Amukamara
	Marcus Cooper
CB	Kyle Fuller
	Bryce Callahan
S	Eddie Jackson
	D. Houston-Carson
S	Adrian Amos
	Deon Bush

SPECIALISTS
LS	Patrick Scales
P	Pat O'Donnell
K	Cody Parkey
KR	Tarik Cohen
PR	Tarik Cohen

BYE: WEEK 5   Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Detroit	Minnesota	@ Detroit	@ N.Y. Giants	L.A. Rams	Green Bay	@ San Francisco	@ Minnesota
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 22 / 12:30 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

CHICAGO **BEARS**

Akiem Hicks, DE

↘ **5-YEAR WIN TREND**
27-53
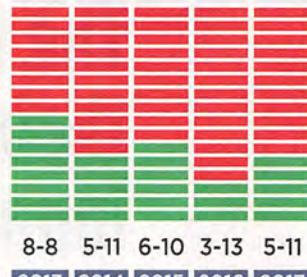
8-8	5-11	6-10	3-13	5-11
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

RUNNING BACKS: If Kareem Hunt was the ideal back for this offense in Kansas City, Bears starter Jordan Howard could encounter problems. Howard lacks Hunt's receiving ability. This caused Howard some offseason angst. Howard's best runs have been outside zone plays and this offense by design is more suited to inside zone blocking. Still, Howard can't be discounted. He is a pile-driver thriving on yards after contact, and that works behind any blocking scheme. With improved hands, there's no reason he couldn't fit in.

Tarik Cohen can make plays in the passing game and doesn't mind running inside despite lacking size. Nagy should come up with exciting ways to get the scatback into the open field on third downs. Retaining Benny Cunningham ensures they have at least one excellent pass blocker with outstanding special teams skills. Fullback Michael Burton won't be required to do much beyond blocking.

RECEIVERS: So much depends on the recovery of two injured receivers. Free agent Allen Robinson signed after an ACL tear last year kept him from being part of Jacksonville's rise. At 6-3 and 211 pounds, he can be the downfield, jump-ball target Trubisky lacked last season. However, Robinson's strong suit has never been speed, and he's coming off a ligament tear which happened early last season.

Kevin White has been a nonfactor in his first three seasons due to injuries, but last year's broken shoulder shouldn't linger. If Robinson and White spread out defenses, former Falcon Taylor Gabriel can be an ideal slot fit as one of the league's fastest players. Former Eagle Trey Burton was signed as the "move" tight end to complement Dion Sims and Adam Shaheen. It makes up for the loss of injured tight end Zach Miller. Better size and speed make this receiver corps an improved red-zone threat.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The most critical addition here might be the new coach of the unit, not the players. Harry Hiestand was line coach for the Bears' 2006 run to an NFC title and commands respect. The Bears last year finished one penalty short of the league high in holding and two short of the high for false starts, so Hiestand must address sloppy technique.

Getting back veteran guard Kyle Long should be a huge factor, provided he really is finally over shoulder, neck and ankle problems. Charles Leno Jr. and Bobby Massie rate among the league's bottom half as pass-blocking tackles. Leno had six holds and six false starts last year. But this isn't an offense emphasizing seven-step quarterback drops, so holding

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Bears

"When the Bears said they were hiring (Matt) Nagy and were going RPO (run-pass option), it set them up for a problem. If you're using RPO, the first thing you need isn't a back or receiver with specific abilities. It's an offensive line capable of controlling the point of attack. Even passes in RPO start off with run blocking. In an NFL RPO, it all has to happen

within a yard of the line of scrimmage or it's an ineligible receiver downfield penalty when you throw. So you need strong, aggressive linemen capable of delivering blocks right at the point. That's not the Bears' line. They were lateral blockers who occupied defenders and gave **Jordan Howard** time to find lanes. They need to completely retool the line and maybe even get a better blocking tight end before they'll be really successful at an RPO game."

⬎ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	17-23	Atlanta Falcons
09/17	L	7-29	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
09/24	W	23-17	Pittsburgh Steelers
09/28	L	14-35	Green Bay Packers
10/09	L	17-20	Minnesota Vikings
10/15	W	27-24	Baltimore Ravens
10/22	W	17-3	Carolina Panthers
10/29	L	12-20	New Orleans Saints
11/12	L	16-23	Green Bay Packers
11/19	L	24-27	Detroit Lions
11/26	L	3-31	Philadelphia Eagles
12/03	L	14-15	San Francisco 49ers
12/10	W	33-7	Cincinnati Bengals
12/16	L	10-20	Detroit Lions
12/24	W	20-3	Cleveland Browns
12/31	L	10-23	Minnesota Vikings

2017 RECORD: 5-11

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Howard	276	1,122	4.1	53	9
Cohen	87	370	4.3	46	2
Trubisky	41	248	6.0	46	2
Cunningham	9	29	3.2	12	0
Burton	4	9	2.3	7	0
Glennon	4	4	1.0	2	0
Bellamy	1	6	6.0	6	0
CHICAGO	422	1,788	4.2	53	13
OPPONENTS	432	1,730	4.0	58t	10

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Wright	59	614	10.4	22	1
Cohen	53	353	6.7	70	1
Bellamy	24	376	15.7	46t	1
Inman	23	334	14.5	26	1
Howard	23	125	5.4	12	0
Cunningham	20	240	12.0	40	2
Miller	20	236	11.8	29	2
Sims	15	180	12.0	27t	1
Brown	13	129	9.9	17	0
Shaheen	12	127	10.6	31	3
Thompson	11	125	11.4	20	1
McBride	8	144	18.0	45	0
Wheaton	3	51	17.0	22	0
Gentry	3	35	11.7	15	0
Burton	2	8	4.0	6	0
White	2	6	3.0	6	0
CHICAGO	291	3,085	10.6	70	13
OPPONENTS	343	3,653	10.7	88t	18

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Trubisky	330	196	2,193	7	7
Glennon	140	93	833	4	5
Cohen	2	1	21	1	0
O'Donnell	1	1	38	1	0
CHICAGO	473	291	2,811	13	12
OPPONENTS	529	343	3,376	18	8

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Cohen	26	583	22.4	46	0
Thompson	11	229	20.8	29	0
Cunningham	7	147	21.0	28	0
Robertson-Harris	1	7	7.0	7	0
Acho	1	3	3.0	3	0
CHICAGO	46	969	21.1	46	0
OPPONENTS	32	699	21.8	96t	1

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Cohen	29	272	9.4	61t	1
Jackson	2	6	3.0	7	0
Callahan	1	59	59.0	59t	1
CHICAGO	32	337	10.5	61t	2
OPPONENTS	49	512	10.4	77t	1

SACKS	CHICAGO 42.0, OPPONENTS 39.0

Hicks 8.5, Floyd 4.5, Houston 4.0, McPhee 4.0, Acho 3.0, Unrein 2.5, C. Jones 2.0, Kwiatkoski 2.0, Robertson-Harris 2.0, Trevathan 2.0, Young 2.0, Goldman 1.5, Bullard 1.0, Callahan 1.0, H. Jones 1.0, LeBlanc 1.0

⬎ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	287.4	30
Rushing	111.8	16
Passing	175.7	32
Scoring	16.5	29
Punt returns	10.5	3
Kick returns	21.1	19
Red zone TD%	60.6	6
Total defense	319.1	10
Against rush	108.1	11
Against pass	211.0	7
Points allowed	20.0	9
Interceptions	8	29t
Sacks	42.0	7t
Turnover diff.	0	15

and sacks should decrease. Center Cody Whitehair may move to guard, with second-round pick James Daniels coming in at center. Whitehair is fine at either position, as long as he isn't shuttled back and forth between the two like last season.

DEFENSE

Nagy's biggest offseason break was retaining Vic Fangio as defensive coordinator. Testifying to Fangio's effectiveness is the fact that the Bears were the only top-10 defense without a Pro Bowl player. He didn't do it with mirrors, but certainly no one confused this group's talent level with the 1985 Bears. Fangio's 3-4 uses plenty of disguised coverages and has become second nature for the secondary. Now, it must lead to more turnovers than in the past.

DEFENSIVE LINE: End Akiem Hicks played at a Pro Bowl level last year without receiving the honor, so he's on a mission. Hicks' play and better health for nose tackle Eddie Goldman created a stronger interior push. Goldman appears on the verge of taking a step like Hicks did in 2017. After a two-year apprenticeship, Jonathan Bullard assumes the right-end spot Mitch Unrein manned before leaving in free agency. By gambling less and paying more attention to detail, Bullard's athletic ability could elevate the line. Roy Robertson-Harris and John Jenkins add some depth, but more is needed. It's a stout front that struggled stuffing the run or rushing the passer last year when depth became depleted.

LINEBACKERS: The age of Leonard Floyd has arrived. Floyd's persistence and speed while rushing passers are apparent even through past inabilities to remain healthy. After finishing sixth in sack efficiency, the Bears disassembled their outside rush by jettisoning veterans Pernell McPhee and Willie Young. So Floyd must expand his game and someone needs to complement him. Former 49er Aaron Lynch hopes to revive a career that has stagnated the last two seasons—after

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Chicago head coach Matt Nagy

While Nagy's biggest influence was easily Chiefs coach Andy Reid, he didn't plop down a copy of the Kansas City playbook at Halas Hall as a starting point. Nagy's own twists on the traditional West Coast style make the new attack unique. His extensive use of run-pass option (RPO) is blended with a willingness to move players and create matchup problems for defenses. This is an outgrowth of Nagy's start in pro football as an Arena Football League quarterback. Nagy can be expected to gamble as a strategizer and playcaller based on his brief run as the Chiefs' offensive coordinator.

NAGY: CHARLES REX ARBOGAST / AP

CHICAGO **BEARS**

he made 12.5 sacks in his first two years, including 6.0 in Fangio's scheme one season.

Sam Acho's dependability and leadership make him a valued reserve in the outside-linebacker rotation. Inside, there are questions regarding size. Danny Trevathan is still a leader and violent hitter but hasn't stayed healthy. First-round draft pick Roquan Smith should get a chance to start immediately, either at Trevathan's spot or as a replacement for Nick Kwiatkoski, who must show he's more than a run plug.

SECONDARY: Realizing the importance of continuity in pass coverage, the Bears retained their entire secondary after it improved greatly. Young safeties Eddie Jackson and Adrian Amos and cornerbacks Kyle Fuller, Prince Amukamara and Bryce Callahan have mastered the scheme and communication. Last year this triggered coverage sacks. What it hasn't done is spawn interceptions. For three straight seasons the defense has matched a franchise single-season record low of eight interceptions. A more advanced group may gamble more for the football. Fuller made his greatest strides in man-to-man coverage. When healthy, Callahan makes his speed apparent in nickel slot coverage. Amukamara must shake a

reputation for being "all coverage, no interceptions." The safeties displayed better ball-hawking ability by the end of last season. There is overall depth in abundance, including safety Deon Bush, slot corner Cre'Von LeBlanc and veteran corner Marcus Cooper.

IMPACT NEWCOMER

At 6-3 with a 40-inch vertical leap, wide receiver **Allen Robinson** is open even when he's covered. If he retains his speed after last year's ACL tear, he is the go-to guy who also takes pressure off of other receivers. Watch for him on slants or outcuts with RPO throws.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Punter Pat O'Donnell comes off a career-best 47.0-yard average after mastering the directional game. New kicker Cody Parkey made 86.4 percent of his field goals for three teams before earning a chance to secure a home in Chicago. The elusive Cohen's greatest strength in the return game is on punts, although he has gradually improved on kick returns. Coverage units built momentum after the core gained experience, and they could be a strength behind Joshua Bellamy, Sherrick McManis, Cunningham, Acho and a slew of defensive backs.

BOTTOM LINE

Offseason optimism built over a possible worst-to-first Bears leap under their new coach. However, the stark reality is Pace has made too many draft-day mistakes to adequately fill a roster. Chicago's lack of quality depth, especially on the defensive line and at outside linebacker, is devastating because rotations here are critical. Depth at wide receiver is also lacking.

While it's likely the league's worst passing attack will improve simply through the element of surprise from using a new offense, talent deficiency caps any climb. Until the Bears field a roster capable of sustained success, they'll dog-paddle just to reach .500.

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Bears suffered five consecutive losing seasons was from 1996-2000. Spanning the final three years of coach Dave Wannstedt's tenure and the first two seasons under his successor, Dick Jauron, Chicago posted a 26-54 record, finishing last in the division four times during that stretch. The Bears used eight different starting quarterbacks across those five seasons, including Dave Krieg, Erik Kramer, Rick Mirer, **Steve Stenstrom**, Moses Moreno, Shane Matthews, Cade McNown and Jim Miller.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C+
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

STENSTROM: ADRIAN DENNIS / AP; ROBINSON: PHELAN M. EBENHACK / AP

NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **LB/DE** Aaron Lynch
  (free agent, San Francisco)
- **WR** Allen Robinson
  (free agent, Jacksonville)
- **QB** Chase Daniel
  (free agent, New Orleans)
- **WR** Taylor Gabriel
  (free agent, Atlanta)
- **TE** Trey Burton
  (free agent, Philadelphia)
- **K** Cody Parkey
  (free agent, Miami)

Trey Burton

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Bears found a speedy hitter in the first round with Georgia inside linebacker **Roquan Smith**. He could become an instant field leader for a defense needing one. Linebacker Danny Trevathan missed 25 games—11 with the Bears—in the last four years and Smith can play inside at his spot or the other inside 'backer. Smith makes perfect form tackles on the legs and defends seam passes. Speed makes him a potential A-gap blitzer, which the Bears have lacked. Second-round pick James Daniels from Iowa is a center who can play guard and has great explosion off the ball, while wide receiver Anthony Miller is a solid route-runner.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
A-

THE BEARS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	8	Roquan Smith	LB	6-1	225	21	Georgia
2	39	James Daniels	OL	6-4	295	20	Iowa
2	51	Anthony Miller	WR	5-11	190	23	Memphis
4	115	Joel Iyiegbuniwe	LB	6-1	230	22	Western Kentucky
5	145	Bilal Nichols	DT	6-4	290	21	Delaware
6	181	Kylie Fitts	LB	6-4	263	23	Utah
7	224	Javon Wims	WR	6-3	215	23	Georgia

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Matt Nagy, **Head Coach**; Mark Helfrich, **Offensive Coordinator**; Vic Fangio, **Defensive Coordinator**; Chris Tabor, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9	Bray, Tyler	QB	6-6	225	26	6	Tennessee
4	Daniel, Chase	QB	6-0	225	31	10	Missouri
10	Trubisky, Mitchell	QB	6-3	222	24	2	North Carolina

OFFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
62	Averill, Travis	C	6-3	295	24	1	Boise State
55	Grasu, Hroniss	C	6-3	301	27	4	Oregon
60	Greene, Brandon	OL	6-5	295	24	1	Alabama
64	Kush, Eric	OL	6-4	317	29	6	California (Pa.)
63	Lee, Cameron	OL	6-5	312	24	1	Illinois State
72	Leno Jr., Charles	T	6-3	306	26	5	Boise State
75	Long, Kyle	G	6-6	316	29	6	Oregon
70	Massie, Bobby	T	6-6	317	29	7	Ole Miss
67	Morgan, Jordan	OL	6-3	311	24	2	Kutztown
68	Pericak, Will	G	6-3	300	28	3	Colorado
79	Sowell, Bradley	T	6-7	312	29	7	Ole Miss
71	Watford, Earl	G	6-3	300	28	6	James Madison
65	Whitehair, Cody	OL	6-3	310	25	3	Kansas State

RUNNING BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
46	Burton, Michael	FB	6-0	240	26	4	Rutgers
29	Cohen, Tarik	RB	5-6	181	23	2	North Carolina A&T
30	Cunningham, Benny	RB	5-10	218	28	6	Middle Tennessee
24	Howard, Jordan	RB	6-1	224	23	3	Indiana
33	Mizzell, Taquan	RB	5-10	192	24	2	Virginia

RECEIVERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
14	Ayers, DeMarcus	WR	5-11	190	24	1	Houston
15	Bellamy, Joshua	WR	6-0	208	29	4	Louisville
84	Braunecker, Ben	TE	6-4	252	24	3	Harvard
85	Brown, Daniel	TE	6-5	247	26	4	James Madison
	Brown, Marlon	WR	6-5	214	27	5	Georgia
80	Burton, Trey	TE	6-3	235	26	5	Florida
13	Fowler, Bennie	WR	6-1	212	27	4	Michigan State
18	Gabriel, Taylor	WR	5-8	165	27	5	Abilene Christian
19	Gentry, Tanner	WR	6-2	209	23	1	Wyoming
12	Robinson II, Allen	WR	6-3	211	25	5	Penn State
87	Shaheen, Adam	TE	6-6	270	24	2	Ashland
88	Sims, Dion	TE	6-4	268	27	6	Michigan State
82	Thompson, Colin	TE	6-4	257	24	1	Temple
11	White, Kevin	WR	6-3	216	25	4	West Virginia

DEFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
90	Bullard, Jonathan	DE	6-2	296	24	3	Florida
69	Coward, Rashaad	DL	6-5	320	23	1	Old Dominion
91	Goldman, Eddie	DT	6-4	320	24	4	Florida State
96	Hicks, Akiem	DE	6-5	332	28	7	Regina (Canada)
73	Jenkins, John	DT	6-3	327	29	6	Georgia
95	Robertson-Harris, Roy	DE	6-7	294	25	2	UTEP
97	Williams, Nick	DT	6-4	297	28	4	Samford

LINEBACKERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
93	Acho, Sam	LB	6-3	259	30	8	Texas
58	Anderson, Jonathan	LB	6-3	237	26	4	TCU
94	Floyd, Leonard	LB	6-6	251	26	3	Georgia
47	Irving, Isaiah	LB	6-2	254	24	2	San Jose State
57	Jones, Howard	LB	6-4	238	28	3	Shepherd
44	Kwiatkoski, Nick	LB	6-2	242	25	3	West Virginia
99	Lynch, Aaron	LB/DE	6-6	270	25	5	South Florida
53	Timu, John	LB	6-0	246	26	4	Washington
59	Trevathan, Danny	LB	6-1	239	28	7	Kentucky

DEFENSIVE BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
38	Amos, Adrian	S	6-0	214	25	4	Penn State
20	Amukamara, Prince	CB	6-0	204	29	8	Nebraska
26	Bush, Deon	S	6-0	205	25	3	Miami (Fla.)
37	Callahan, Bryce	CB	5-10	188	26	4	Rice
31	Cooper Sr., Marcus	CB	6-2	197	28	6	Rutgers
23	Fuller, Kyle	CB	6-0	190	26	5	Virginia Tech
35	Grant, Doran	CB	5-10	196	25	2	Ohio State
32	Hall, Deiondre'	DB	6-2	206	24	3	Northern Iowa
36	Houston-Carson, DeAndre	S	6-1	205	25	3	William & Mary
39	Jackson, Eddie	S	6-0	202	25	2	Alabama
22	LeBlanc, Cre'Von	CB	5-11	190	24	3	Florida Atlantic
27	McManis, Sherrick	CB	6-1	193	30	9	Northwestern
25	Mincy, Jonathon	CB	5-10	196	26	1	Auburn

SPECIALISTS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
16	O'Donnell, Pat	P	6-4	217	27	5	Miami (Fla.)
1	Parkey, Cody	K	6-0	190	26	5	Auburn
48	Scales, Patrick	LS	6-4	239	30	4	Utah State

NEW ORLEANS
SAINTS

Alvin Kamara, RB

KAMARA: RUSTY COSTANZA / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
Tampa Bay	**Cleveland**	**@ Atlanta**	**@ N.Y. Giants**	**Washington**	**@ Baltimore**	**@ Minnesota**	**L.A. Rams**
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 8 / 8:15 PM	Oct. 21 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 28 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 4 / 4:25 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 11-5 **HOME:** 7-1
CONFERENCE: 8-4 **DIVISION:** 4-2

HEAD COACH **SEAN PAYTON** (12TH YEAR, 105-71)
CAREER RECORD: 105-71

▶ **ONLINE:** www.neworleanssaints.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @Saints
▶ **TICKETS:** 504-731-1700
▶ **STADIUM:** Mercedes-Benz Superdome
▶ **CAPACITY:** 73,208
▶ **TURF:** FieldTurf

Saints look to build on 2017 and keep reaping benefits from momentous draft haul

BY PETE WILLIAMS
Street & Smith's correspondent

A year ago, the Saints' longtime trio of general manager Mickey Loomis, head coach Sean Payton and quarterback Drew Brees seemed poised for a breakup. New Orleans was coming off three consecutive 7-9 seasons. Loomis appeared to be losing his Midas touch with the draft and free agents. Brees, while still productive, was 38 and entering a contract year with an eye toward finishing his career with a contender.

1
PREDICTED FINISH **NFC SOUTH**

Instead, Loomis took his five draft picks in the first three rounds and produced a class hailed as one of the NFL's best in years. Payton guided the team to an 11-5 mark. Brees continued to defy Father Time and inked a two-year extension, figuring his chances of winning another Super Bowl were best in New Orleans.

That's in large part because of the now-sophomore class. Cornerback Marshon Lattimore and running back Alvin Kamara won honors for Defensive and Offensive Rookie of the Year, respectively, the first teammates to do so in 50 years. Along with right tackle Ryan Ramczyk, safety Marcus Williams and edge rusher Trey Hendrickson, they've transformed the Saints from an aging group of underachievers to upstart contenders.

OFFENSE

Coordinator Pete Carmichael has a great gig. Each year he lines up his West Coast offense with a Canton-bound quarterback in Brees and a surplus of backs and receivers. This year is no different with Mark Ingram and Kamara in the backfield. He's had better groups of receivers, though Brees will more than make do with Pro Bowler Michael Thomas, along with Ted Ginn Jr. and free agent Cameron Meredith. An underrated offensive line anchors the attack.

QUARTERBACKS: Brees could celebrate his 40th birthday during the playoffs in January should the Saints get there and who's to say he won't keep playing until he's 45? He's 17 months younger than Tom Brady and an offseason workout fanatic who has an option for 2019. The Saints have not groomed a successor. Because of New Orleans' improved defense and running game, Brees in 2017 was able to throw for his fewest yards (4,334), touchdowns (23) and interceptions (8) in his 12 seasons with the Saints while setting an NFL record for completion percentage (72.0). Taysom Hill's stock seems to have risen in Payton's eyes after the undrafted quarterback from BYU joined the Saints in September off waivers from Green Bay. Hill could become the eventual successor

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Drew Brees
	Tom Savage
RB	Mark Ingram
	Alvin Kamara
LT	Terron Armstead
	Bryce Harris
LG	Andrus Peat
	John Fullington
C	Max Unger
	Cameron Tom
RG	Larry Warford
	Jermon Bushrod
RT	Ryan Ramczyk
	John Theus
TE	Benjamin Watson
	Josh Hill
WR	Michael Thomas
	Brandon Coleman
WR	Cameron Meredith
	Tre'Quan Smith
WR	Ted Ginn Jr.
	Tommylee Lewis

DEFENSE

DE	Cameron Jordan
	Trey Hendrickson
DT	David Onyemata
	David Parry
DT	Tyeler Davison
	Woodrow Hamilton
DE	Sheldon Rankins
	Alex Okafor
LB	Demario Davis
	Hau'oli Kikaha
LB	A.J. Klein
	Manti Te'o
LB	Alex Anzalone
	Craig Robertson
CB	Ken Crawley
	Patrick Robinson
CB	Marshon Lattimore
	Justin Hardee
SS	Vonn Bell
	Chris Banjo
FS	Marcus Williams
	Kurt Coleman

SPECIALISTS

LS	Zach Wood
P	Thomas Morstead
K	Wil Lutz
KR	Ted Ginn Jr.
PR	Ted Ginn Jr.

BYE: WEEK 6 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17
@ Cincinnati	Philadelphia	Atlanta	@ Dallas	@ Tampa Bay	@ Carolina	Pittsburgh	Carolina
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 22 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 29 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 17 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 23 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

NEW ORLEANS **SAINTS**

Drew Brees, QB

↘ **5-YEAR WIN TREND**
43-37

11-5	7-9	7-9	7-9	11-5
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

to Brees, though it could be a long wait. The Saints also signed former Texans quarterback Tom Savage as insurance for this season.

RUNNING BACKS: Payton prefers having two versatile backs to share the load and Ingram and Kamara are as good a duo as he's had. Ingram had the best season of his seven-year NFL career in 2017, rushing for career highs of 1,124 yards and 12 touchdowns. The former Heisman Trophy winner also enjoyed career bests with 58 receptions for 416 yards and enters 2018 in a contract year. Kamara, a third-round pick out of Tennessee in 2017, was the fifth running back drafted but his 6.1-yard rushing average led all running backs with at least 120 attempts. His quick emergence made Adrian Peterson expendable and the future Hall-of-Famer was dealt to Arizona in October. Kamara, who made

the Pro Bowl, led all rookies with 14 total touchdowns and ranked second with 1,554 yards from scrimmage. He also led rookies with 81 receptions, the third most by a rookie running back in NFL history.

RECEIVERS: Though the Saints finished second in the NFL in total offense and fifth in passing offense, their 19th-place showing in third-down conversions speaks to a lack of depth at receiver. Pro Bowler Thomas (104 catches, 1,245 yards) has emerged as one of the game's best after two seasons, while reliable speedster Ginn, 33, continued to put up solid numbers in his first season in New Orleans. Willie Snead had a disappointing 2017 and the Saints did not match Baltimore's two-year offer, having already signed Meredith as a replacement. Meredith, who missed last season with a knee injury, will be reunited with Saints assistant Curtis

Johnson, his position coach in Chicago. At tight end, the Saints explored a reunion with Jimmy Graham before finding the price too high. Instead, they brought back Benjamin Watson, who was a great fit on the field and in the locker room in New Orleans from 2013-15.

OFFENSIVE LINE: Loomis overhauled the offensive line before the 2015 season and it has become one of the team's more stable units, albeit with annual tweaks. Center Max Unger, who arrived in the unpopular-at-the-time trade for Pro Bowl tight end Graham, has become an anchor of the group. Andrus Peat, the Saints' top pick in 2015, eventually could move to left tackle but has become one of the league's best left guards. Terron Armstead, viewed as a project on draft day in 2013, has become an elite left tackle. Before last season, Loomis signed free-agent right guard

BREES: CHARLIE NEIBERGALL / AP; LATTIMORE: DAVID GOLDMAN / AP

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Saints

"Every year you wonder if this is the year (Drew) Brees gets hurt or declines and every year he proves you wrong. Sooner or later they have to develop a backup plan. The offensive line doesn't get enough credit. There's turnover but (Mickey) Loomis doesn't let it slip. You can talk about Brees and whoever they're running at you, but those guys get it done. That draft class made them younger and better in a hurry. You

might have thought they were going to have to blow things up and start over, but suddenly they look like a younger team. With **(Marshon) Lattimore** and (Marcus) Williams, that's the best looking secondary they've had a while. It seems like linebackers are always their issue, but (linebackers coach Mike) Nolan has done a good job. They're no longer trying to hit a home run with big-name free-agent linebackers; just second-tier guys and the draft and it's starting to work for them. (Alex) Anzalone could be a difference-maker for them."

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/11	L	19-29	Minnesota Vikings
09/17	L	20-36	New England Patriots
09/24	W	34-13	Carolina Panthers
10/01	W	20-0	Miami Dolphins
10/15	W	52-38	Detroit Lions
10/22	W	26-17	Green Bay Packers
10/29	W	20-12	Chicago Bears
11/05	W	30-10	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
11/12	W	47-10	Buffalo Bills
11/19	W	34-31	Washington Redskins
11/26	L	20-26	Los Angeles Rams
12/03	W	31-21	Carolina Panthers
12/07	L	17-20	Atlanta Falcons
12/17	W	31-19	New York Jets
12/24	W	23-13	Atlanta Falcons
12/31	L	24-31	Tampa Bay Buccaneers

2017 RECORD: 11-5

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Ingram	230	1,124	4.9	72	12
Kamara	120	728	6.1	74t	8
Brees	33	12	0.4	7t	2
Peterson	27	81	3.0	11	0
Ginn Jr.	10	39	3.9	15	0
Edmunds	9	48	5.3	41t	1
Line	7	28	4.0	9	0
Daniel	3	-2	-0.7	0	0
Lewis	2	14	7.0	8	0
Lutz	1	4	4.0	4	0
Kuhn	1	2	2.0	2	0
Hill	1	-8	-8.0	-8	0
NEW ORLEANS	444	2,070	4.7	74t	23
OPPONENTS	406	1,787	4.4	50	11

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Thomas	104	1,245	12.0	43	5
Kamara	81	826	10.2	40	5
Ingram	58	416	7.2	54	0
Ginn Jr.	53	787	14.8	54t	4
Coleman	23	364	15.8	54	3
Fleener	22	295	13.4	33	2
Hill	16	125	7.8	22	1
Lewis	10	116	11.6	52	1
Snead	8	92	11.5	26	0
Hoomanawanui	6	52	8.7	25	1
Line	2	8	4.0	5	1
Peterson	2	4	2.0	3	0
Griffin	1	4	4.0	4	0
NEW ORLEANS	386	4,334	11.2	54t	23
OPPONENTS	329	3,884	11.8	53t	22

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Brees	536	386	4,334	23	8
NEW ORLEANS	536	386	4,189	23	8
OPPONENTS	554	329	3,597	22	20

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Lewis	13	307	23.6	39	0
Kamara	11	347	31.5	106t	1
Ginn Jr.	5	56	11.2	17	0
Edmunds	3	65	21.7	27	0
Griffin	2	23	11.5	12	0
Snead	1	18	18.0	18	0
Kuhn	1	9	9.0	9	0
NEW ORLEANS	36	825	22.9	106t	1
OPPONENTS	32	788	24.6	46	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Ginn Jr.	19	103	5.4	17	0
Lewis	14	115	8.2	24	0
Snead	1	0	0.0	0	0
NEW ORLEANS	34	218	6.4	24	0
OPPONENTS	24	249	10.4	74T	1

SACKS — NEW ORLEANS 42.0, OPPONENTS 20.0

Jordan 13.0, Bell 4.5, Okafor 4.5, Kikaha 4.0, Johnson 2.5, Hendrickson 2.0, Klein 2.0, Onyemata 2.0, Rankins 2.0, Robertson 2.0, Vaccaro 1.5, Anzalone 1.0, Bush 1.0

⬊ **2017 NUMBERS**

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	391.2	2
Rushing	129.4	5
Passing	261.8	5
Scoring	28.0	4
Punt returns	6.4	25
Kick returns	22.9	6
Red zone TD%	61.3	5
Total defense	336.5	17
Against rush	111.7	16
Against pass	224.8	15
Points allowed	20.4	10
Interceptions	20	3
Sacks	42.0	7t
Turnover diff.	+7	9t

Larry Warford to a four-year deal and the ex-Lion responded with his first Pro Bowl season. At right tackle, Ramczyk, drafted at the end of last year's first round, quickly established himself as one of the best run-blocking tackles in the league. The Saints will miss versatile backup Senio Kelemete, who signed with Houston, but they brought back equally versatile Jermon Bushrod, who played in New Orleans from 2007-12.

DEFENSE

The defense made huge strides in Dennis Allen's second year as coordinator in 2017, ranking 10th in the league in scoring defense (20.4 points per game) and seventh in NFL passer rating allowed, the team's strongest showing since the 2009 Super Bowl season. Allen has more young playmakers than ever and the continued improvement of his 4-3 scheme will go a long way to determining the Saints' success in 2018.

DEFENSIVE LINE: This is another much-improved unit that contributed to the team's 42.0 sacks, which were tied for seventh in the league and most for the Saints since 2013. Cameron Jordan, who has not missed a game in his seven seasons, is one of the game's best edge rushers, earning his third Pro Bowl trip in 2017 after producing a career-high 13.0 sacks. Sheldon Rankins, New Orleans' top pick in 2016, gets overshadowed by Jordan at the other end spot but made steady progress last season after spending his rookie campaign coming back from a broken fibula. First-round pick Marcus Davenport also figures into the mix. Alex

INSIDE THE HEADSET
New Orleans head coach Sean Payton

Payton has shifted to a more balanced approach on offense in recent years. He has always preferred to have two strong backs, but he's relied less on the passing game, even though Brees hasn't lost much off his fastball. Payton always looked for high-character guys in the draft and the "Bountygate" scandal seems to have made him even more focused on locker-room culture. Nobody brings back players for a second stint more than the Saints, who like proven character guys who still have value (at a cheaper price) as leaders and on-field contributors even when past their prime.

NFC SOUTH

NEW ORLEANS **SAINTS**

Okafor started 10 games last year before suffering a torn Achilles and the Saints re-signed him for two years and $6.8 million. Hendrickson contributed as a rookie and figures to see more time. Nose tackle Tyeler Davison plays mostly in running situations, splitting time with David Onyemata, a fourth-round pick in 2016 who seemed to get better as last season progressed.

LINEBACKERS: For all the improvement on defense last season, the Saints took a step back against the run, falling from 15th in the league in yards per carry to 28th. Though there are no Pro Bowlers in this group, it's a deep bunch, even more so with the addition of middle linebacker Demario Davis from the Jets. Linebackers coach Mike Nolan likely will sort out positions during the preseason and A.J. Klein, last year's starter in the middle after arriving from Carolina, figures to start there again. Craig Robertson might be the team's best player on this unit and his versatility will keep him on the field somewhere. Alex Anzalone won a job out of training camp as a rookie before a shoulder injury sidelined him after four games. Also back from injured reserve is Nathan Stupar, a major contributor in 2016. Manti Te'o, reunited with Nolan, his position coach with the Chargers, is

coming off a bounce-back season, and is particularly strong against the run. Defensive end Hau'oli Kikaha can play outside linebacker when needed.

SECONDARY: Lattimore's ability to shut down top receivers transformed a previously porous New Orleans secondary. The rookie cornerback essentially closed off half the field, earning Defensive Rookie of the Year. Lattimore is the anchor of a talented young secondary that includes rookie sensation Williams, Vonn Bell and Ken Crawley. Williams made an immediate impact as a first-year safety, though his missed tackle cost the Saints a trip to the NFC title game. The Saints brought back Patrick Robinson, who spent his first five seasons in New Orleans and won a Super Bowl ring with the Eagles last year. Robinson will likely be a nickel back next to starting corners Lattimore and Crawley. The Saints parted ways with safety Kenny Vaccaro, essentially replacing him with free agent Kurt Coleman, whom they signed to a three-year deal. Coleman joins a growing list of former Carolina Panthers and Ohio State alumni on the roster.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Punter Thomas Morstead remains one of the best in the game, averaging 47.0 yards per punt in 2017. He and Brees are the only players

At 6-3 and 200 pounds, **Cameron Meredith** is the type of tall, athletic receiver Drew Brees loves to target. Meredith enjoyed a promising breakout season in 2016 before missing last year with a knee injury. Between having Brees as his quarterback, the Saints' system and a reunion with Curtis Johnson, his position coach in Chicago, Meredith could have a big year.

left from the Saints' 2009 championship team. Wil Lutz has become the most effective kicker the team has had in years. His 31 field goals last year tied a team record held by Morten Andersen and John Carney. Ginn had a decent year receiving in 2017 but did not contribute in the return game the way he did in Carolina and the Saints turned at times to Tommylee Lewis, who fared no better. Kamara began returning kickoffs late in the year and the NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year averaged 31.5 yards on 11 kick returns, including a team record 106-yard return for a touchdown against Tampa Bay in the last game of the regular season.

BOTTOM LINE

Not many GM/coach tandems would get a chance to endure as much as Loomis and Payton have since the 2009 Super Bowl championship. But the patience and loyalty shown by late owner Tom Benson toward the duo was rewarded with a stunning turnaround season. Loomis demonstrated again why he's one of the NFL's best at managing rosters through the draft and free agency. With a dramatic influx of talent from the 2017 draft to go with a veteran nucleus and the ageless Brees, the Saints are positioned well for a title run in 2018.

2018 TEAM GRADE: A-
2018 STOCKWATCH: BUY

THE LAST TIME ...
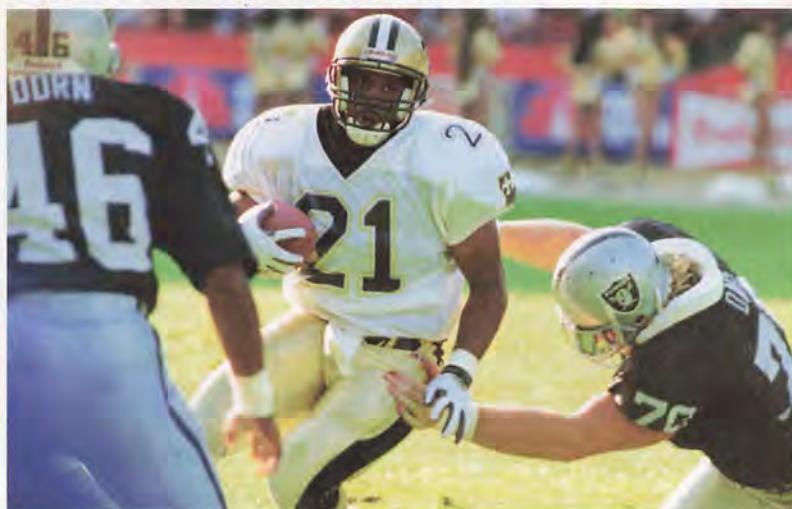
... a position player for the Saints scored at least 100 points in a season **was 1989 when running back Dalton Hilliard tallied 108 points.** In his only season as a full-time starter, Hilliard rushed 344 times for 1,262 yards and 13 touchdowns while adding 52 receptions for 514 yards and five more scores. Hilliard's 18 total touchdowns remain a single-season record for the franchise.

HILLIARD: AP PHOTO; MEREDITH: ROSS D. FRANKLIN / AP

NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **TE** Benjamin Watson (free agent, Baltimore)
- **WR** Cameron Meredith (free agent, Chicago)
- **QB** Tom Savage (free agent, Houston)
- **LB** Demario Davis (free agent, N.Y. Jets)
- **CB** Patrick Robinson (free agent, Philadelphia)
- **S** Kurt Coleman (free agent, Carolina)

Kurt Coleman

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

2018 DRAFT GRADE C+

The Saints gave up a fifth-round pick and their No. 1 choice in 2019 to swap first-round picks with Green Bay in order to land defensive end **Marcus Davenport**, a 6-7 edge rusher considered raw but with huge upside. Payton says Davenport's speed and size make him a prototype for the position.

With no second-round pick, the Saints selected wide receiver Tre'Quan Smith in the third round. Though deep at receiver, the Saints lack front-line talent and the 6-1, 200-pound Smith, who flew under the radar at UCF, is the type of bigger receiver who thrives with Drew Brees.

THE SAINTS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	14	Marcus Davenport	DE	6-7	255	22	UTSA
3	91	Tre'Quan Smith	WR	6-1	200	21	UCF
4	127	Rick Leonard	T	6-7	311	21	Florida State
5	164	Natrell Jamerson	S	6-0	198	22	Wisconsin
6	189	Kamrin Moore	CB	5-11	200	23	Boston College
6	201	Boston Scott	RB	5-7	203	23	Louisiana Tech
7	245	Will Clapp	C	6-5	314	21	LSU

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Sean Payton, **Head Coach;** Pete Carmichael, **Offensive Coordinator;** Dennis Allen, **Defensive Coordinator;** Bradford Banta, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9	Brees, Drew	QB	6-0	209	39	18	Purdue
7	Hill, Taysom	QB	6-2	221	28	2	BYU
3	Savage, Tom	QB	6-4	230	27	5	Pittsburgh

OFFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
66	Allen, Jack	OL	6-2	296	25	2	Michigan State
72	Armstead, Terron	T	6-5	304	27	6	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
74	Bushrod, Jermon	OL	6-5	318	34	12	Towson
77	Fullington, John	OL	6-5	300	27	2	Washington State
79	Harris, Bryce	T	6-6	300	29	7	Fresno State
75	Peat, Andrus	T/G	6-7	316	24	4	Stanford
71	Ramczyk, Ryan	T	6-6	314	24	2	Wisconsin
62	Theaker, Nate	G	6-5	315	24	1	Wayne State (Mich.)
	Theus, John	T	6-6	303	24	3	Georgia
67	Tiller, Andrew	G	6-4	324	29	5	Syracuse
63	Tom, Cameron	C	6-4	300	23	2	Southern Miss
78	Turner, Landon	G	6-4	325	25	2	North Carolina
60	Unger, Max	C	6-5	305	32	10	Oregon
67	Warford, Larry	G	6-3	317	27	6	Kentucky

RUNNING BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
33	Edmunds, Trey	RB	6-2	223	23	2	Maryland
22	Ingram, Mark	RB	5-9	215	28	8	Alabama
41	Kamara, Alvin	RB	5-10	215	23	2	Tennessee
36	Lasco, Daniel	RB	6-1	205	25	3	California
39	Line, Zach	RB	6-1	233	28	6	SMU
27	Williams, Jonathan	RB	6-0	223	24	3	Arkansas

RECEIVERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
80	Carr, Austin	WR	6-1	195	24	2	Northwestern
16	Coleman, Brandon	WR	6-6	225	26	4	Rutgers
14	Dural, Travin	WR	6-2	206	24	1	LSU
81	Ellis, Alex	TE	6-4	245	25	2	Tennessee
82	Fleener, Coby	TE	6-6	251	29	7	Stanford
19	Ginn Jr., Ted	WR	5-11	180	33	12	Ohio State
45	Griffin, Garrett	TE	6-4	240	24	1	Air Force
89	Hill, Josh	TE	6-5	250	28	6	Idaho State
84	Hoomanawanui, Michael	TE	6-4	265	30	9	Illinois
	Huff, Josh	WR	5-11	206	26	4	Oregon
11	Lewis, Tommylee	WR	5-7	168	25	3	Northern Illinois
	Meredith, Cameron	WR	6-3	207	25	4	Illinois State
13	Thomas, Michael	WR	6-3	212	25	3	Ohio State
	Turner, Paul	WR	5-10	193	25	2	Louisiana Tech
82	Watson, Benjamin	TE	6-3	251	37	15	Georgia

DEFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
95	Davison, Tyeler	DT	6-2	309	25	4	Fresno State
96	Hamilton, Woodrow	DT	6-3	315	25	2	Ole Miss
91	Hendrickson, Trey	DE	6-4	270	23	2	Florida Atlantic
74	Jenkins, Alex	DE	6-6	270	25	1	Incarnate Word
90	Johnson, George	DE	6-4	265	30	7	Rutgers
94	Jordan, Cameron	DE	6-4	287	29	8	California
44	Kikaha, Hau'oli	DE	6-3	246	26	4	Washington
68	Lawrence, Devaroe	DT	6-2	294	25	1	Auburn
70	Loewen, Mitchell	DL	6-5	275	25	2	Arkansas
97	Muhammad, Al-Quadin	DE	6-4	250	23	2	Miami (Fla.)
57	Okafor, Alex	DE	6-4	260	27	6	Texas
93	Onyemata, David	DT	6-4	300	25	3	Manitoba (Canada)
58	Parry, David	DT	6-2	317	26	4	Stanford
98	Rankins, Sheldon	DE	6-2	305	24	3	Louisville

LINEBACKERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
47	Anzalone, Alex	LB	6-3	241	23	2	Florida
99	Bighill, Adam	LB	5-10	230	29	1	Central Washington
56	Davis, Demario	LB	6-2	248	29	7	Arkansas State
	Elliott, Jayrone	LB	6-3	255	26	4	Toledo
53	Klein, A.J.	LB	6-1	240	27	6	Iowa State
56	Mauti, Michael	LB	6-2	243	28	6	Penn State
52	Robertson, Craig	LB	6-1	234	30	7	North Texas
59	Skov, Shayne	LB	6-3	247	28	3	Stanford
54	Stupar, Nathan	LB	6-2	240	30	6	Penn State
45	Tautu, Sae	LB	6-3	245	26	1	BYU
51	Te'o, Manti	LB	6-1	241	27	6	Notre Dame

DEFENSIVE BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
31	Banjo, Chris	S	5-10	207	28	5	SMU
48	Bell, Vonn	S	5-11	205	23	3	Ohio State
40	Breaux, Delvin	CB	6-1	210	28	3	LSU
20	Coleman, Kurt	S	5-11	208	30	9	Ohio State
20	Crawley, Ken	CB	6-1	180	25	3	Colorado
34	Hardee, Justin	DB	6-1	200	24	2	Illinois
21	Harris, De'Vante	CB	5-11	190	25	3	Texas A&M
	Jefferson, Rickey	S	5-11	208	23	1	LSU
23	Lattimore, Marshon	CB	6-0	192	22	2	Ohio State
37	Maulet, Arthur	CB	5-10	190	25	1	Memphis
21	Robinson, Patrick	CB	5-11	191	31	9	Florida State
27	Sylve, Bradley	DB	6-0	180	25	1	Alabama
28	Thompson, Mykkele	DB	6-2	195	25	3	Texas
43	Williams, Marcus	S	6-1	195	22	2	Utah
26	Williams, P.J.	CB	6-0	196	25	4	Florida State

SPECIALISTS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
3	Lutz, Wil	K	5-11	184	24	3	Georgia State
6	Morstead, Thomas	P	6-4	235	32	10	SMU
49	Wood, Zach	LS	6-3	255	25	2	SMU

ATLANTA
FALCONS

Matt Ryan, QB
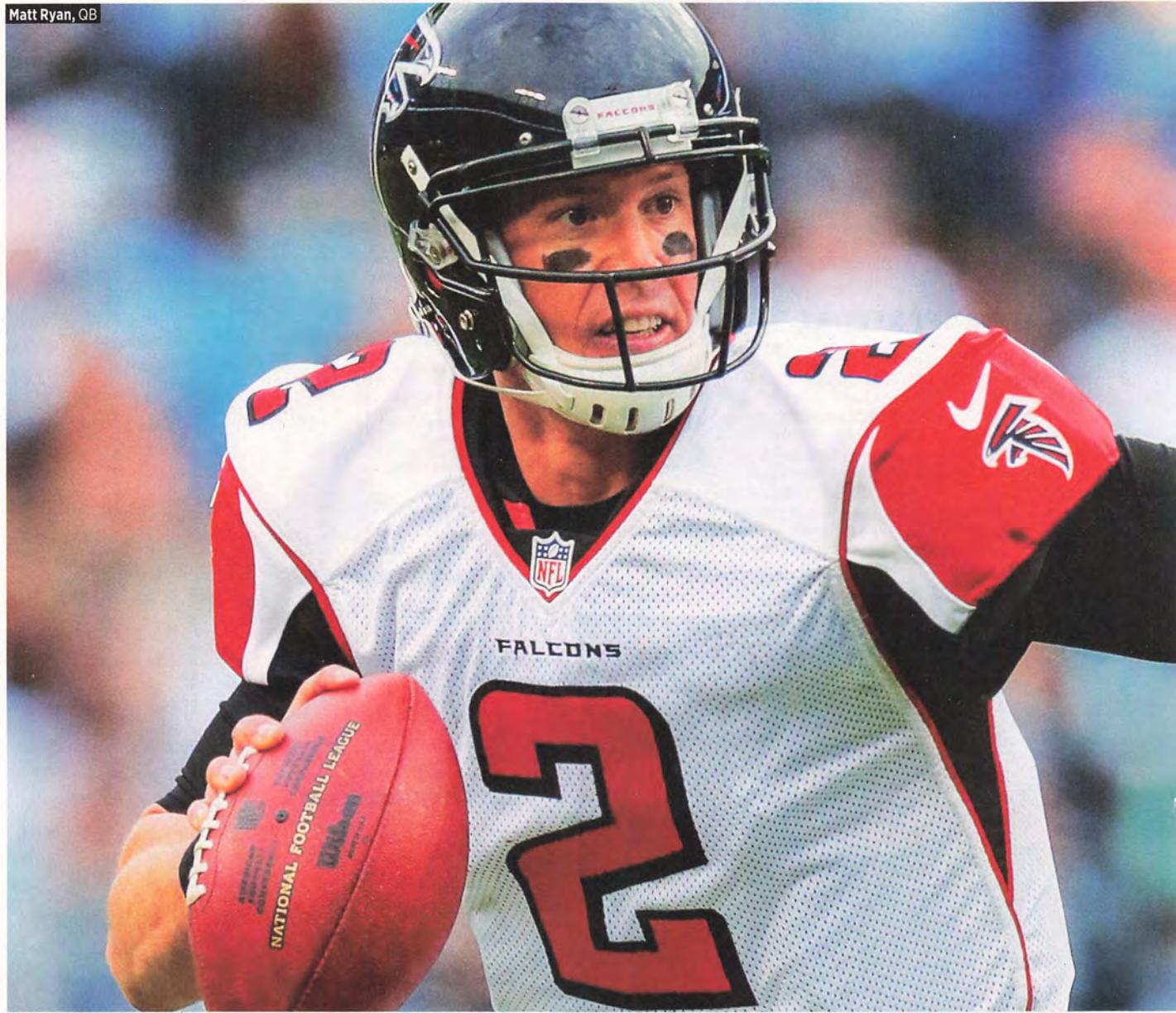
RYAN: CHRIS KEANE / AP

⬂ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 9
@ Philadelphia	Carolina	New Orleans	Cincinnati	@ Pittsburgh	Tampa Bay	N.Y. Giants	@ Washington
Sept. 6 / 8:20 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 22 / 8:15 PM	Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM

2017 RECORD   **OVERALL:** 10-6 **HOME:** 5-3
CONFERENCE: 9-3 **DIVISION:** 4-2

HEAD COACH   **DAN QUINN** (FOURTH YEAR, 29-19)
CAREER RECORD: 29-19

▶ **ONLINE:** www.atlantafalcons.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @AtlantaFalcons
▶ **TICKETS:** 470-341-4500
▶ **STADIUM:** Mercedes-Benz Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 71,000
▶ **TURF:** FieldTurf

Birds need offense reaching peak efficiency to make Super Bowl a home game

BY D. ORLANDO LEDBETTER
Atlanta Journal Constitution

2 PREDICTED FINISH **NFC SOUTH**

The Falcons' season ended in a five-receiver set on the two-yard line, trying to throw their way into the NFC Championship Game. The failed play, a lob pass to Julio Jones, was emblematic of the offense's fall from grace under first-year coordinator Steve Sarkisian and a signal for the future. The unit must be correctly retooled and some power added to hammer out yards when the going gets tough. While they were the only NFC team to return to the playoffs after their dramatic Super Bowl collapse, the Falcons plan to move forward and maximize quarterback Matt Ryan, who's heading into what should be the prime of his career. The Falcons plan to get the offense rolling again while the young defense continues to improve. Sprinkle in improved special teams and maybe the Falcons can make another run to the Super Bowl. The big game would be a home game for Atlanta—Super Bowl LIII will be played Feb. 3, 2019, at Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

OFFENSE

There was a drastic drop in several key statistical areas under offensive coordinator Sarkisian, who hadn't been in the NFL since 2004 and never was a full-time NFL playcaller. Falcons coach Dan Quinn stood by his man and went and got him some help in the form of quarterbacks coach Greg Knapp and wide receiver Calvin Ridley in the draft. Sarkisian's playcalling, along with inconsistent play from Atlanta's tight ends, the lack of big plays and a rash of dropped passes led to the backsliding.

QUARTERBACKS: Will the MVP Ryan please stand up? Foiled by his receivers and shaky pass protection, Ryan's 2017 play was below the MVP level he set in 2016. Ryan completed 342 of 529 passes (64.7 percent) for 4,095 yards, 20 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. Ryan threw 18 fewer touchdown passes and five more interceptions. His 20 TD throws were his lowest since he tossed 16 as a rookie in 2008. His increase in interceptions came from seven dropped or tipped passes by his receivers, who led the league in dropped passes. The Falcons know that Ryan is most effective when he can step up in the pocket and deliver the ball. Ryan was also on the move too much. He rushed for 143 yards, the second-highest total of his career. He had 145 yards in the 2014 season.

Backup Matt Schaub didn't play in 2017 and completed only one pass in three attempts two years ago.

RUNNING BACKS: Devonta

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Matt Ryan
	Matt Schaub
RB	Devonta Freeman
	Tevin Coleman
LT	Jake Matthews
	Ty Sambrailo
LG	Andy Levitre
	Ben Garland
C	Alex Mack
	Ben Garland
RG	Brandon Fusco
	Wes Schweitzer
RT	Ryan Schraeder
	Austin Pasztor
TE	Austin Hooper
	Logan Paulsen
WR	Calvin Ridley
	Reggie Davis
WR	Mohamed Sanu
	Russell Gage
WR	Julio Jones
	Justin Hardy

DEFENSE

DE	Takkarist McKinley
	Brooks Reed
DT	Deadrin Senat
	Jack Crawford
DT	Grady Jarrett
	Justin Zimmer
DE	Vic Beasley
	Derrick Shelby
LB	Duke Riley
	Foyesade Oluokun
LB	Deion Jones
	Foyesade Oluokun
LB	De'Vondre Campbell
	Vic Beasley
CB	Robert Alford
	Justin Bethel
CB	Desmond Trufant
	Brian Poole
SS	Keanu Neal
	Quincy Mauger
FS	Ricardo Allen
	Damontae Kazee

SPECIALISTS

LS	Josh Harris
P	Matt Bosher
K	Matt Bryant
KR	Reggie Davis
PR	Marvin Hall

BYE: WEEK 8   Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
@ Cleveland	Dallas	@ New Orleans	Baltimore	@ Green Bay	Arizona	@ Carolina	@ Tampa Bay
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 22 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

ATLANTA **FALCONS**

Devonta Freeman, RB

↘ **5-YEAR WIN TREND**
39-41

			CT	PL

4-12	6-10	8-8	11-5	10-6
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
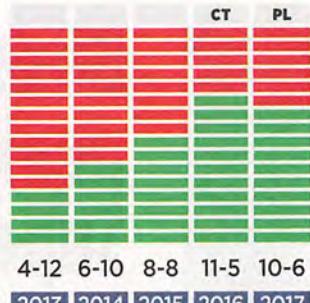
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

Freeman and Tevin Coleman comprise one of the most dangerous rushing duos in the league. They will look to have bounce-back seasons in 2018. Freeman was slowed by two concussions and a knee injury. He missed two games and failed to reach 1,000 yards rushing after two consecutive seasons of eclipsing that figure. He also continued to struggle in blitz pickup. Freeman came back and ran hard after both concussions. However, the team may have overpaid in making him the highest-paid running back in the league and may not be able to keep Coleman much past this season. Coleman had 156 carries for 628 yards and five touchdowns. He also caught 27 passes for 299 yards and three touchdowns. The team moved on from fullback Derrick Coleman and will have an all-comers situation to find a replacement.

RECEIVERS: No one had a clear explanation for the 30 dropped passes, which was the most of any team in the league. But the receiving corps hopes there are better days ahead. The dynamic Jones had a 59.5-percent catch rate (148 targets, 88 catches), which was the second lowest since his rookie season when he had a 56.8-percent catch rate. Jones was a big part of the red-zone problem—he caught only five of 19 passes (25.3 percent) thrown to him inside the 20-yard line for one touchdown. Jones finished with 1,444 yards and only three touchdowns. Mohamed Sanu had a 69.8-percent catch rate as he hauled in 67 of 96 targets and had 703 yards and tied a career high with five touchdowns. Ridley, a dynamic route-runner, was added through the draft and will take over Taylor Gabriel's role in the slot. Tight end Austin Hooper is expected to continue to improve, while Logan Paulsen was added for his blocking.

OFFENSIVE LINE: One of the big reasons why the Falcons went to Super Bowl LI was that the same five players on the offensive line started all 19 games. They couldn't dodge the injury bug in 2017 and started four combinations of players. Also, scrappy right guard Wes Schweitzer was a liability against elite defensive tackles. Andy Levitre was solid. Ben Garland was not an adequate backup. Veteran Brandon Fusco was added in free agency to take over at right guard. The Falcons didn't have a lot of money to spend and didn't go after a top-quality veteran to improve the line. Sean Harlow was inactive for all 16 games in 2017 but could jump into the mix at guard. Garland and Schweitzer combined to surrender 46 total pressures, with Garland playing 341 snaps in relief of an injured Levitre. Jake Matthews and Ryan Schraeder

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Falcons

"When I was with the Falcons, the owner (Arthur Blank) made it very clear that it was about winning the Super Bowl. Just winning nine and 10 games and going to the playoffs was not going to be good enough. It had to hurt them to blow the big lead in the big game (against New England in Super Bowl LI), but you have to commend them for bouncing back and returning to the playoffs. Now that they've regrouped, maybe they can make another Super Bowl run. They are set to pay Matt Ryan like he won that Super Bowl game. I really don't blame them because he's been extremely durable and has performed at a high level when they've been able to surround him with weapons and protect him properly. Ryan is not getting any younger, but they will get the offense back on track. Getting a veteran coach like Greg Knapp in the building will only help. He has a wealth of offensive knowledge for (Steve) Sarkisian to tap into. While other teams make all of these flashy moves, don't write the Falcons off as Super Bowl contenders just yet."

2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	23-17	Chicago Bears
09/17	W	34-23	Green Bay Packers
09/24	W	30-26	Detroit Lions
10/01	L	17-23	Buffalo Bills
10/15	L	17-20	Miami Dolphins
10/22	L	7-23	New England Patriots
10/29	W	25-20	New York Jets
11/05	L	17-20	Carolina Panthers
11/12	W	27-7	Dallas Cowboys
11/20	W	34-31	Seattle Seahawks
11/26	W	34-20	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
12/03	L	9-14	Minnesota Vikings
12/07	W	20-17	New Orleans Saints
12/18	W	24-21	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
12/24	L	13-23	New Orleans Saints
12/31	W	22-10	Carolina Panthers

2017 RECORD: 10-6

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Freeman	196	865	4.4	44	7
T. Coleman	156	628	4.0	52	5
Ryan	32	143	4.5	16	0
Ward	30	129	4.3	17	0
Gabriel	8	49	6.1	15	0
Sanu	4	10	2.5	4	0
D. Coleman	2	8	4.0	5	0
J. Jones	1	15	15.0	15	0
Bosher	1	0	0.0	0	0
ATLANTA	430	1,847	4.3	52	12
OPPONENTS	402	1,665	4.1	46	9

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
J. Jones	88	1,444	16.4	53	3
Sanu	67	703	10.5	25	5
Hooper	49	526	10.7	88t	3
Freeman	36	317	8.8	29	1
Gabriel	33	378	11.5	40t	1
T. Coleman	27	299	11.1	39	3
Hardy	20	221	11.0	27	3
Toilolo	12	122	10.2	25t	1
Williams	3	30	10.0	14	0
Ward	3	14	4.7	11	0
Hall	2	60	30.0	40t	1
D. Coleman	2	20	10.0	11	0
Roberts	1	12	12.0	12	0
ATLANTA	343	4,146	12.1	88t	21
OPPONENTS	362	3,725	10.3	54t	22

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Ryan	529	342	4,095	20	12
Sanu	1	1	51	1	0
ATLANTA	530	343	3,990	21	12
OPPONENTS	553	362	3,429	22	8

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Roberts	38	860	22.6	61	0
Garland	1	11	11.0	11	0
ATLANTA	39	871	22.3	61	0
OPPONENTS	33	863	26.2	57	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Roberts	27	201	7.4	27	0
ATLANTA	27	201	7.4	27	0
OPPONENTS	22	179	8.1	19	0

SACKS	ATLANTA 39.0, OPPONENTS 24.0

Clayborn 9.5, McKinley 6.0, Beasley 5.0, Jarrett 4.0, Reed 4.0, Poe 2.5, Campbell 2.0, Ishmael 1.0, D. Jones 1.0, Poole 1.0, Shelby 1.0, Trufant 1.0, Upshaw 1.0

2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	364.8	8
Rushing	115.4	13
Passing	249.4	8
Scoring	22.1	14
Punt returns	7.4	20
Kick returns	22.3	11
Red zone TD%	49.2	23
Total defense	318.4	9
Against rush	104.1	9
Against pass	214.3	12
Points allowed	19.7	8
Interceptions	8	29t
Sacks	39.0	13t
Turnover diff.	-2	19

must continue to attack in the outside zone-blocking scheme and hold up in pass protection.

DEFENSE

Coordinator Marquand Manuel, a future head-coaching candidate, and Quinn have pointed out that they were in a nickel package nearly 70 percent of the time last season. Atlanta is a 4-3 team that likes to play cover-3 zones. The Falcons prefer to cover and attack the ball with the notion that the pass rush will improve. Covering running backs and tight ends with the speedy linebackers is another hallmark of the defensive play-calls.

DEFENSIVE LINE: The great Vic Beasley experiment on the line is over. He's set to return exclusively to end, where he led the league in sacks with 15.5 in 2016. While shuttling between end and strongside linebacker, Beasley's attacking style suffered and his sacks dipped. The Falcons let Adrian Clayborn, who led them in sacks with 9.5 in 2017, leave in free agency to clear the way for Takkarist McKinley, while Brooks Reed will provide some depth. Grady Jarrett is an emerging player at tackle. He stacks up well against the run and provides some pass rush. Jack Crawford and Derrick Shelby are rotational players who can both play end and slide inside to tackle in pass-rush situations. University of South Florida product Deadrin Senat was drafted to help replace Dontari Poe, who left in free agency to sign with Carolina.

LINEBACKERS: The remaking of the linebacking corps into a sleek, run-and-hit battalion is nearly complete. The Falcons are solid at middle and strongside linebacker. The weakside search continues. The Falcons believe that middle linebacker Deion Jones, who made the Pro Bowl as a first alternate in his second season, is just scratching the surface of his immense talents. After leading the team in tackles with 138 and interceptions with

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Atlanta head coach Dan Quinn

Quinn is tired of seeing his hard-hitting and bone-rattling team throw passes in power-football situations. There was the third-and-one pass in the Super Bowl, the jet sweep on the goal line against the Patriots and the jump ball in the playoffs last season. One of the new wrinkles to the outside zone offense is the power component. Quinn acknowledges that the Falcons must be able to run the ball even when the opponent knows it's coming. The days of running misdirection and trying to trick defenses with play-action passes are over. With the added smash-mouth components, the Falcons believe they can fix their scoring and red-zone problems.

ATLANTA **FALCONS**

three, the Falcons believe his command of the defense will continue to grow. De'Vondre Campbell is set to play the strongside spot, while second-year man Duke Riley will get another shot on the weakside. The experiment to start Riley last season didn't last long as the rookie missed too many tackles and ended the season as a reserve and special-teams player. Campbell had to go back to weakside linebacker and enjoyed a strong season. Kemal Ishmael, a former safety, was used as a dime linebacker in the box.

SECONDARY: This unit will be challenged to come up with more interceptions. The Falcons' defensive backs get their hands on a lot passes and make a ton of deflections, but some of those deflections need to be converted into interceptions. Cornerback Robert Alford led the team with seven penalties, with five holding calls and two pass-interference calls. He had 75 nullified yards in penalties. Alford did break up 20 passes, but had only one interception.

Desmond Trufant, the other cornerback, had just two interceptions and has only nine over his career. He'll need to have a bounce-back season in 2018 as teams are no longer afraid to throw to his side. Nickel back Brian Poole continued to hold down the slot and showed some toughness as a blitzer.

Strong safety Keanu Neal, who was also a late Pro Bowl addition, continued to grow and provided the defense with a physical presence. Free safety Ricardo Allen was also solid and took better angles to the ball.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Kicker Matt Bryant, who was re-signed to a three-year contract, shows no signs of slowing down. He was the Falcons' key offensive weapon late last season as the offense struggled in the red zone. Punter Matt Bosher averaged 44.9 yards on 53 punts with a net average of 40.8. He placed 19 punts inside the 20-yard line. Overall, the Falcons' special teams were substandard, though. They finished in the bottom half of the league (22nd). The coverage units ranked 32nd (last) in kickoff coverage at 26.2 yards per return. Marvin Hall is the favorite to win the punt-return job and Reggie Davis will get a look as the kick returner.

BOTTOM LINE

For the Falcons, their clock is ticking. They reached Super Bowl LI with a defense featuring seven first- or second-year starters. Yeah, they collapsed, but now those players are seasoned and have battle scars. The defense is expected to keep ascending while the offense must return to peak efficiency. Ryan is 33, Alex

IMPACT NEWCOMER
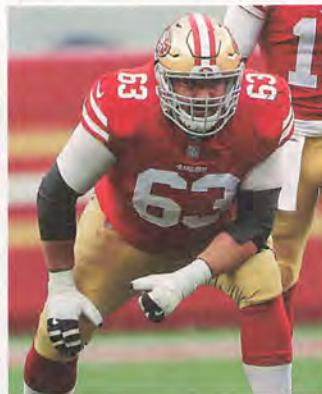
Veteran guard **Brandon Fusco** was added in free agency with hopes that he will stabilize the right-guard position. He's expected to beat out Wes Schweitzer and help improve the rushing attack and fix the interior of the passing pocket. He has made 80 starts in the NFL with the Vikings and 49ers and should be a significant upgrade. Fusco has a reputation for being a mauler in the run game and fits well in the Falcons' outside zone-running system. He's not spectacular in pass protection, but he gets his feet set and is a technician who doesn't get steamrolled.

Mack is 32, Jones is 29 and Sanu 28. The time is now.

2018 TEAM GRADE: A-
2018 STOCKWATCH: OUTPERFORM

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Falcons led the NFL in scoring defense was 1977, when their swarming "Grits Blitz" scheme masterminded by assistant coach Jerry Glanville allowed just 129 points over the regular season, good for 9.2 points per game. Only two opponents were able to score more than 20 points on the Falcons, while Atlanta held seven teams to single digits, including two shutouts. While the defense was stout, the offense was one of the worst in the league, averaging just 12.8 points per game en route to a 7-7 record.

New York Giants running back Larry Csonka is stopped by members of the Falcons' 'Gritz Blitz'—Ray Easterling, Frank Reed, Fulton Kuykendall and Ralph Ortega—on Oct. 2, 1977.

↘ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **CB** Justin Bethel
  (free agent, Arizona)
- **TE** Logan Paulsen
  (free agent, San Francisco)
- **OG** Brandon Fusco
  (free agent, San Francisco)

Justin Bethel

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Falcons went offense early before trying to fill some holes on defense. Atlanta head coach Dan Quinn got offensive coordinator Steve Sarkisian a new weapon in wide receiver **Calvin Ridley** before going after a big cornerback and then filling the team's most important draft need at defensive tackle. The Falcons added Ridley to essentially replace Taylor Gabriel, who signed in free agency with the Chicago Bears. In the second round, they selected Colorado cornerback Isaiah Oliver, who at 6-0 and 201 pounds will be expected to match up against some of the big receivers in the NFC South. Deadrin Senat was selected in the third round out of South Florida to fill the hole at defensive tackle. He could develop into a disruptive force.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
A-

↘ THE FALCONS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	26	Calvin Ridley	WR	6-1	190	23	Alabama
2	58	Isaiah Oliver	CB	6-0	201	21	Colorado
3	90	Deadrin Senat	DT	6-0	314	23	South Florida
4	126	Ito Smith	RB	5-9	195	22	Southern Miss
6	194	Russell Gage	WR	6-0	184	22	LSU
6	200	Foyesade Oluokun	LB	6-2	215	23	Yale

↘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Dan Quinn, **Head Coach**; Steve Sarkisian, **Offensive Coordinator**; Marquand Manuel, **Defensive Coordinator**; Keith Armstrong, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9	Grayson, Garrett	QB	6-2	220	27	2	Colorado State
2	Ryan, Matt	QB	6-4	217	33	11	Boston College
8	Schaub, Matt	QB	6-6	245	37	15	Virginia

OFFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
76	Brunskill, Daniel	T	6-5	260	24	1	San Diego State
72	Crowley, Lucas	OL	6-3	269	24	1	North Carolina
75	Douglas, Jamil	G	6-4	308	26	2	Arizona State
65	Fusco, Brandon	G	6-4	306	30	8	Slippery Rock
63	Garland, Ben	G	6-5	308	30	5	Air Force
64	Harlow, Sean	G	6-4	284	23	2	Oregon State
67	Levitre, Andy	G	6-2	303	32	10	Oregon State
51	Mack, Alex	C	6-4	311	32	10	California
70	Matthews, Jake	T	6-5	305	26	5	Texas A&M
68	Pasztor, Austin	OL	6-7	305	27	6	Virginia
74	Sambrailo, Ty	T	6-5	315	26	4	Colorado State
71	Schweitzer, Wes	G	6-5	314	24	3	San Jose State
73	Schraeder, Ryan	T	6-7	300	30	6	Valdosta State

RUNNING BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
26	Coleman, Tevin	RB	6-1	210	25	4	Indiana
24	Freeman, Devonta	RB	5-8	206	26	5	Florida State
25	Magee, Terrence	RB	5-9	220	25	2	LSU

RECEIVERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
16	Davis, Reggie	WR	6-0	170	22	1	Georgia
89	Gray, Alex	TE	6-4	231	27	1	United Kingdom
17	Hall, Marvin	WR	5-10	190	25	2	Washington
87	Hall, Rannell	WR	6-1	200	25	2	UCF
14	Hardy, Justin	WR	5-10	192	26	4	East Carolina
81	Hooper, Austin	TE	6-4	248	23	3	Stanford
11	Jones, Julio	WR	6-3	220	29	8	Alabama
82	Paulsen, Logan	TE	6-5	268	31	9	UCLA
12	Sanu, Mohamed	WR	6-2	210	29	7	Rutgers
85	Saubert, Eric	TE	6-5	253	24	2	Drake

DEFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
44	Beasley, Vic	DE	6-3	246	26	4	Clemson
95	Crawford, Jack	DE	6-5	288	30	7	Penn State
77	Ivie, Joey	DT	6-3	295	23	1	Florida
97	Jarrett, Grady	DT	6-0	305	25	4	Clemson
55	Jones, J'Terius	DE	6-3	245	24	1	Miami (Ohio)
98	McKinley, Takkarist	DE	6-2	250	22	2	UCLA
50	Reed, Brooks	DE	6-3	254	31	8	Arizona
90	Shelby, Derrick	DE	6-2	280	29	7	Utah
98	Smith, Garrison	DT	6-1	295	26	5	Georgia
92	Zimmer, Justin	DT	6-3	292	25	1	Ferris State

LINEBACKERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
59	Campbell, De'Vondre	LB	6-4	232	25	3	Minnesota
45	Jones, Deion	LB	6-1	222	23	3	LSU
42	Riley, Duke	LB	6-1	218	24	2	LSU

DEFENSIVE BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
23	Alford, Robert	CB	5-10	186	29	6	Southeastern Louisiana
37	Allen, Ricardo	S	5-9	186	26	4	Purdue
28	Bethel, Justin	DB	6-0	200	28	7	Presbyterian
38	Branch, Marcelis	FS	5-11	180	24	1	Robert Morris
39	Burton, Deante	DB	6-2	205	24	1	Kansas State
42	Graham, Tyson	DB	6-2	208	24	1	South Dakota
36	Ishmael, Kemal	S	6-0	206	27	6	UCF
27	Kazee, Damontae	S	5-11	174	25	2	San Diego State
41	Mauger, Quincy	S	6-0	206	23	1	Georgia
35	McFadden, Leon	DB	5-10	195	27	4	San Diego State
22	Neal, Keanu	S	6-0	211	23	3	Florida
34	Poole, Brian	CB	5-10	211	25	3	Florida
21	Trufant, Desmond	CB	6-0	190	28	6	Washington
33	Wreh-Wilson, Blidi	CB	6-1	190	28	6	Connecticut

SPECIALISTS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
5	Bosher, Matt	P	6-0	208	30	8	Miami (Fla.)
3	Bryant, Matt	K	5-9	203	43	17	Baylor
47	Harris, Josh	LS	6-1	224	29	7	Auburn

CAROLINA
PANTHERS

Cam Newton, QB

NEWTON: BILL FEIG / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
Dallas	**@ Atlanta**	**Cincinnati**	**N.Y. Giants**	**@ Washington**	**@ Philadelphia**	**Baltimore**	**Tampa Bay**
Sept. 9 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 7 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM

Panthers look to boost offense with addition of OC Turner and weapons for Cam

BY JOSEPH PERSON
Charlotte Observer

It was a turbulent offseason for the Panthers, and that's putting it mildly.

The turmoil started in December when Jerry Richardson, Carolina's owner and founder, put the team up for sale amid a sexual harassment scandal.

The Panthers then fired their offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, saw their defensive coordinator go to the Cardinals and removed the interim tag from general manager Marty Hurney.

Lost in all the upheaval is the fact that the Panthers are coming off an 11-win season that culminated with their fourth playoff berth in five years.

But a few constants give Carolina hope it will be in the mix in the NFC South again.

Head coach Ron Rivera and tight end Greg Olsen received contract extensions, Julius Peppers came back for a 17th season and Cam Newton and Luke Kuechly remain in their primes.

That's not a bad start for the next owner, once the dust settles.

OFFENSE

Rivera reached into his past to replace ousted coordinator Mike Shula by hiring Norv Turner, who had Rivera on his staff when he was head coach of the Chargers. The Panthers have been running a version of Turner's scheme since Rivera arrived in 2011, so it should be a smooth transition. Turner will rely on more vertical routes, which play into Newton's strengths. Carolina added speed at receiver and will try to get Christian McCaffrey in space more in his second season.

QUARTERBACKS: Newton has been trending in the wrong direction since his MVP season of 2015, which is why Shula and quarterbacks coach Ken Dorsey were fired. There's also been talk that Carolina needed someone willing to be more stern with Newton, who's now in his eighth season.

Enter Turner, who's had success working with quarterbacks with varied skillsets—from Troy Aikman to Philip Rivers to Teddy Bridgewater—over the course of three-plus decades in the NFL.

Newton benefited in 2017 from the arrival of McCaffrey, whose 80 receptions were the most by a rookie in team history. Newton's completion percentage jumped from 52.9 percent in 2016 to 59.1, nearly matching his numbers from his MVP season.

But Newton still was way too inconsistent as a passer, finishing with the second-most interceptions of his career (16) and the second-worst quarterback rating (80.7).

The hope is a different voice will

PREDICTED FINISH NFC SOUTH **3**

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Cam Newton
	Garrett Gilbert
RB	Christian McCaffrey
	Cameron Artis-Payne
LT	Matt Kalil
	Taylor Moton
LG	Tyler Larsen
	Jeremiah Sirles
C	Ryan Kalil
	Greg Van Roten
RG	Trai Turner
	Jeremiah Sirles
RT	Daryl Williams
	Taylor Moton
TE	Greg Olsen
	Ian Thomas
WR	Devin Funchess
	D.J. Moore
WR	Torrey Smith
	Curtis Samuel
WR	D.J. Moore
	Jarius Wright

DEFENSE

DE	Julius Peppers
	Wes Horton
DT	Dontari Poe
	Kyle Love
DT	Kawann Short
	Vernon Butler
DE	Mario Addison
	Marquis Haynes
OLB	Shaq Thompson
	Ben Jacobs
MLB	Luke Kuechly
	David Mayo
OLB	Thomas Davis
	Jermaine Carter
CB	James Bradberry
	Ross Cockrell
CB	Donte Jackson
	Kevon Seymour
SS	Da'Norris Searcy
	Rashaan Gaulden
FS	Mike Adams
	Demetrious Cox

SPECIALISTS

LS	J.J. Jansen
P	Michael Palardy
K	Graham Gano
KR	Damiere Byrd
PR	Christian McCaffrey

BYE: WEEK 4 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17
@ Pittsburgh	@ Detroit	Seattle	@ Tampa Bay	@ Cleveland	New Orleans	Atlanta	@ New Orleans
Nov. 8 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 17 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

CAROLINA **PANTHERS**

Greg Olsen, TE

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
51-28-1

PL	PL	CT		PL

12-4	7-8-1	15-1	6-10	11-5
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

change that.

RUNNING BACKS: By most measures McCaffrey had a successful rookie season. The No. 8 pick in 2017 came up big in the passing game, with 80 catches for 651 yards–the most ever by a Panthers running back. He also had five touchdown receptions.

But the 5-11, 205-pounder failed to produce the kind of highlight-making plays that were a weekly staple of his at Stanford, particularly in the run game. McCaffrey seemed to get swallowed up between the tackles and finished with just 435 rushing yards, a 3.7-yard average and two touchdowns.

Of his eight plays that covered 20 yards or more, seven were catches.

In addition to breathing life into Newton's game, the Panthers expect Turner to use McCaffrey in new and creative ways out of the backfield as he did with Darren Sproles in San Diego.

But the jury is out on whether Cameron Artis-Payne can replace departed free agent Jonathan Stewart as the team's physical, tough-yardage back.

WIDE RECEIVERS: Hurney wasted little time making over the Panthers' receiver group, trading Kelvin Benjamin to Buffalo last October to open up the passing lanes that Benjamin was clogging.

That process continued in earnest during the offseason. First, Hurney traded cornerback Daryl Worley to Philadelphia for speed receiver Torrey Smith, who made up for a mediocre 2017 regular season with a terrific showing in the playoffs for the Eagles.

Hurney then picked up former Vikings slot receiver Jarius Wright in free agency. But his biggest move was using a first-round draft pick on Maryland wideout D.J. Moore, whose ability to make plays after the catch has brought comparisons to former Panther great Steve Smith–including by Smith himself.

But the keys in the passing game will be the health of Pro Bowl tight end Greg Olsen and the play of Devin Funchess, who thrived as the No. 1 wide receiver initially after the Benjamin trade before falling off a bit later in the season.

OFFENSIVE LINE: While the Panthers gave Newton more weapons, they opted not to re-sign one of his protectors up front. Left guard Andrew Norwell priced his way out of the Panthers' plans with an All-Pro season in 2017, which came after Hurney gave right guard Trai Turner a lucrative extension last summer.

Carolina has a lot of money tied up in left tackle Matt Kalil, whose first season with the Panthers was average at best. Pro Football Focus ranked Kalil as one of the league's worst tackles last season, although

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Panthers

"Devin Funchess is a solid No. 2, but D.J. Moore gives them that three-level threat they've been missing since Steve Smith. He's going to be a good complement to Torrey Smith, who is strictly a vertical threat. ... I think (safety) Rashaan Gaulden was a little bit of a reach, especially where they took him (in the third round). I don't think they really solved that safety issue. ... If they can keep **Julius Peppers'** pitch count to 20-25 reps, he can be productive. If he can get 10-15 one-on-one pass rushes a game, he has a chance to get two or three hurries and a sack."

↘ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	23-3	San Francisco 49ers
09/17	W	9-3	Buffalo Bills
09/24	L	13-34	New Orleans Saints
10/01	W	33-30	New England Patriots
10/08	W	27-24	Detroit Lions
10/12	L	23-28	Philadelphia Eagles
10/22	L	3-17	Chicago Bears
10/29	W	17-3	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
11/05	W	20-17	Atlanta Falcons
11/13	W	45-21	Miami Dolphins
11/26	W	35-27	New York Jets
12/03	L	21-31	New Orleans Saints
12/10	W	31-24	Minnesota Vikings
12/17	W	31-24	Green Bay Packers
12/24	W	22-19	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
12/31	L	10-22	Atlanta Falcons

2017 RECORD: 11-5

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Stewart	198	680	3.4	60t	6
Newton	139	754	5.4	69	6
McCaffrey	117	435	3.7	40	2
Artis-Payne	18	95	5.3	43	1
Whittaker	7	18	2.6	8	0
Samuel	4	64	16.0	31	0
Clay	2	27	13.5	29	0
Shepard	2	19	9.5	11	0
Anderson	2	-2	-1.0	-1	0
Byrd	1	12	12.0	12	0
CAROLINA	490	2,102	4.3	69	15
OPPONENTS	353	1,409	4.0	72	7

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
McCaffrey	80	651	8.1	37	5
Funchess	63	840	13.3	44	8
Benjamin	32	475	14.8	43	2
Dickson	30	437	14.6	64	1
Shepard	17	202	11.9	40t	1
Olsen	17	191	11.2	30t	1
Samuel	15	115	7.7	23	0
Byrd	10	105	10.5	31	2
Bersin	8	128	16.0	27	0
Stewart	8	52	6.5	21	1
Clay	5	57	11.4	15	0
Whittaker	5	47	9.4	28t	1
Manhertz	2	17	8.5	11	0
Artis-Payne	1	2	2.0	2	0
CAROLINA	293	3,319	11.3	64	22
OPPONENTS	351	3,969	11.3	70	25

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Newton	492	291	3,302	22	16
Anderson	8	2	17	0	0
Palardy	1	0	0	0	0
CAROLINA	501	293	3,077	22	16
OPPONENTS	550	351	3,665	25	10

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Samuel	10	221	22.1	33	0
Byrd	7	229	32.7	103t	1
Whittaker	6	110	18.3	31	0
Shepard	3	65	21.7	33	0
McCaffrey	3	58	19.3	21	0
Clay	3	52	17.3	19	0
Cox	1	13	13.0	13	0
Mayo	1	12	12.0	12	0
CAROLINA	34	760	22.4	103t	1
OPPONENTS	12	254	21.2	32	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
McCaffrey	22	162	7.4	25	0
Clay	17	147	8.6	60t	1
Byrd	1	9	9.0	9	0
CAROLINA	40	318	7.9	60t	1
OPPONENTS	30	176	5.9	29	0

SACKS   CAROLINA 50.0, OPPONENTS 35.0

Addison 11.0, Peppers 11.0, Short 7.5, Horton 5.5, Love 3.5, Davis 2.5, Munnerlyn 2.0, Thompson 2.0, Kuechly 1.5, Lotulelei 1.5, Bradberry 1.0, Worley 1.0

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	323.7	19
Rushing	131.4	4
Passing	192.3	28
Scoring	22.7	12
Punt returns	8.0	19
Kick returns	22.4	10
Red zone TD%	51.8	21
Total defense	317.1	7
Against rush	88.1	3
Against pass	229.1	18
Points allowed	20.4	11
Interceptions	10	24t
Sacks	50.0	3
Turnover diff.	-1	16t

the former Viking played better down the stretch after getting more comfortable with the offense and Newton's timing.

Right tackle Daryl Williams is coming off a breakout season that should result in his own payday soon.

If Pro Bowl center Ryan Kalil stays healthy during his swan-song campaign and the Panthers find a capable replacement for Norwell, the line should be fairly solid.

DEFENSE

Rivera's coaching tree has grown the past two years, with ex-defensive coordinators Sean McDermott and Steve Wilks moving on for head-coaching jobs in the league. Eric Washington, who replaces Wilks as coordinator, has a strong track record as a D-line coach and could be the next Rivera assistant to be hired away. Washington's 4-3 scheme will feature a strong front seven led by Peppers, Kuechly and tackle Kawann Short. A revamped secondary will have to jell quickly in a quarterback-strong division.

DEFENSIVE LINE: The Panthers' coaching staff and front office weren't sure whether Peppers would come back to play his age-38 season. Peppers gave the entire organization a boost when he signed another one-year deal. The future first-ballot Hall-of-Famer played most of last year with a shoulder injury that required surgery. But the Panthers will be smart with his practice reps so Peppers is ready on Sundays.

Mario Addison, 31, is one of the most underrated edge rushers in the league. The former Redskin has 33 sacks over the past four seasons, including a career-high 11 in 2017.

Short, the Pro Bowl tackle, had a solid season after signing a monster extension

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Carolina head coach Ron Rivera
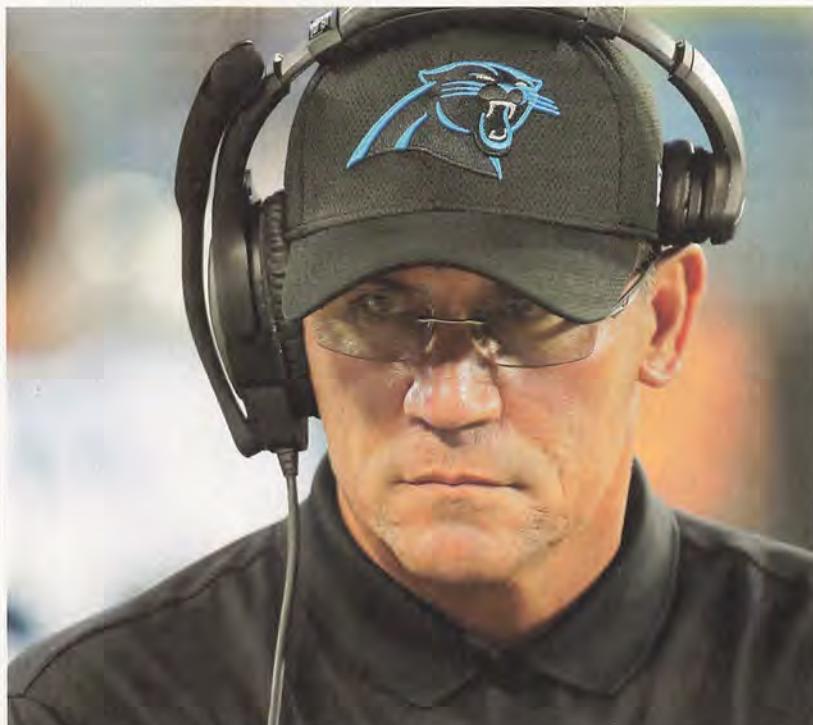
Rivera manages games like a former defensive coordinator. He wants his defense to be rested, so the offense features a healthy mix of run and pass. Rivera almost always will punt and play the field-position game rather than try a long field goal. Despite his background, though, Rivera doesn't meddle with the defense. It's his system and he has the final say, but Rivera gives his coordinators the autonomy to shape the scheme and game plan. With a perennial top-10 defense, one Super Bowl appearance and two Coach-of-the-Year awards in seven seasons, it has been an effective arrangement.

CAROLINA **PANTHERS**

last summer. The former second-round pick finished with 7.5 sacks, along with two forced fumbles and a fumble recovery. He'll play alongside free-agent acquisition Dontari Poe, who looks to be an upgrade over the departed Star Lotulelei.

LINEBACKERS: The Panthers' strongest position group took a couple of hits during the offseason, when Kuechly underwent labrum surgery and Thomas Davis was suspended four games after testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs. Davis says an estrogen blocker in a supplement was the culprit, and hinted he might play beyond this season (after saying initially 2018 would be his final year).

Kuechly should be ready for training camp after having the same surgery as Peppers. The best news for Kuechly's health was the fact he missed only one game due to concussion in '17 after sitting out nine the previous two seasons. At 27, Kuechly remains one of the game's premier linebackers.

Every year the Panthers talk about getting former first-round pick Shaq Thompson more reps. This season they'll have to, with Davis out the first four games. It's time for the athletic and versatile Thompson to become more of a difference-maker.

SECONDARY: Carolina defenders didn't get their hands on enough passes last season, finishing in the bottom half of the league with 10 interceptions, including just four from cornerbacks.

Cornerback James Bradberry promises to bounce back from what he called a "sophomore slump." The former second-round pick is the team's best cover guy, but seldom makes game-changing plays.

There was a lot of head-scratching when the Panthers traded a starting corner for an older receiver. But Hurney's decision to deal Daryl Worley looked better after Worley's DUI arrest and release in Philadelphia.

What hurt was having free-agent pickup Bashaud Breeland—the first choice to replace Worley—fail his physical. That forced Hurney to sign a couple of well-traveled veterans in cornerback Ross Cockrell and safety Da'Norris Searcy.

Carolina tried to bolster the back end of the defense by selecting speedy LSU corner Donte Jackson and Tennessee safety Rashaan Gaulden in the second and third rounds of the draft, respectively.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The Panthers rewarded Graham Gano for a career season with a four-year, $17 million extension.

After a disappointing 2016, Gano led the NFL in field goal percentage by making 29 of 30 kicks, including all 29

The Panthers like their nose tackles to keep blockers off of Luke Kuechly. **Dontari Poe** will do that—and more. Poe has 15.5 sacks and 201 tackles over the past five seasons. That's four sacks and 50 tackles more than Star Lotulelei—the player he replaced—had over that same span.

inside 50 yards. Gano, who competed with rookie draft pick Harrison Butker (who became Kansas City's starting kicker) to keep his job last summer, also led the league with an 85.4 touchback percentage, drilling a franchise-record 70 kickoffs into the end zone.

Michael Palardy was effective in his first full season as an NFL punter. Palardy, who spent part of 2015 in the CFL, set a team record with a 42.4-yard net punting average, which ranked fifth in the league. The left-footer finished with a 46.0-yard gross average and a long of 63.

Damiere Byrd had a 103-yard kickoff return that was the longest play in team history. McCaffrey averaged 7.4 yards as a punt returner, but didn't break any longer than 25 yards.

BOTTOM LINE

While Newton, Kuechly and other key players are still in their primes, the Super Bowl window is closing for Peppers, Davis and Ryan Kalil, all of whom could retire after the season. Hiring Turner should help re-energize Newton, as should the addition of a few more weapons. The front seven will be the strength for new defensive coordinator Washington, who could have some issues in a retooled secondary. The Panthers should contend again in a division that is not getting any weaker. Beating the Saints, who went 3-0 against Carolina last year, would be a good start.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

THE LAST TIME ...
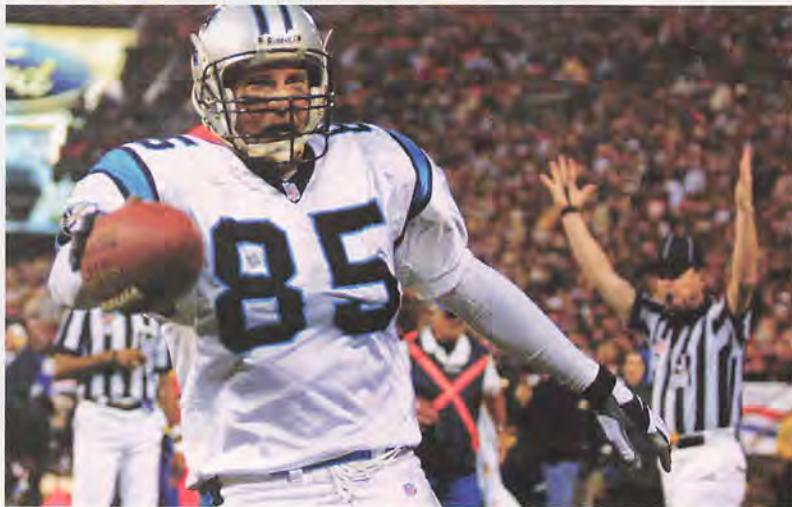
... the Panthers had a tight end record at least 10 touchdowns in a season was 1999. **Wesley Walls hauled in 63 receptions for 822 yards and 12 TDs,** earning his fourth straight Pro Bowl after joining Carolina in 1996. Walls would go on to pile up 324 receptions for 3,902 yards and 44 touchdowns during his seven seasons with the Panthers.

NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **OG** Jeremiah Sirles
  (free agent, Minnesota)
- **CB** Ross Cockrell
  (free agent, N.Y. Giants)
- **S** Da'Norris Searcy
  (free agent, Tennessee)
- **WR** Jarius Wright
  (free agent, Minnesota)
- **DT** Dontari Poe
  (free agent, Atlanta)
- **WR** Torrey Smith
  (trade, Philadelphia)

Torrey Smith

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

Panthers general manager Marty Hurney made speed a priority in the eight-player draft class. Second-round cornerback Donte Jackson of LSU tied for the fastest 40 time at the Combine, while Maryland wide receiver **D.J. Moore** (first round) and Indiana tight end Ian Thomas (fourth) were among the fastest at their position. All three will play immediately, with Moore providing after-the-catch playmaking the Panthers have lacked since Steve Smith. Despite his slight frame, Jackson's speed—he was on LSU's track team—and ball skills will make him a factor at outside corner and nickel. Fourth-round defensive end Marquis Haynes broke Greg Hardy's sacks record at Ole Miss.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
B

THE PANTHERS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	24	D.J. Moore	WR	5-11	215	21	Maryland
2	55	Donte Jackson	CB	5-11	175	22	LSU
3	85	Rashaan Gaulden	DB	6-1	195	23	Tennessee
4	101	Ian Thomas	TE	6-5	250	23	Indiana
4	136	Marquis Haynes	DE	6-3	235	24	Ole Miss
5	161	Jermaine Carter	LB	6-0	230	23	Maryland
7	234	Andre Smith	LB	6-0	240	21	North Carolina
7	242	Kendrick Norton	DT	6-3	310	21	Miami (Fla.)

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Ron Rivera, **Head Coach;** Norv Turner, **Offensive Coordinator;** Eric Washington, **Defensive Coordinator;** Chase Blackburn, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
4	Gilbert, Garrett	QB	6-4	230	27	2	SMU
6	Heinicke, Taylor	QB	6-1	210	25	3	Old Dominion
1	Newton, Cam	QB	6-5	245	29	8	Auburn

OFFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
78	Banner, Zach	T	6-8	360	24	2	USC
76	Clausell, Blaine	T	6-6	330	26	1	Mississippi State
64	Johnson, Dorian	G	6-5	305	23	1	Pittsburgh
75	Kalil, Matt	T	6-7	315	29	7	USC
67	Kalil, Ryan	C	6-2	300	33	12	USC
69	Larsen, Tyler	C	6-4	325	27	3	Utah State
72	Moton, Taylor	T	6-5	325	24	2	Western Michigan
65	Silatolu, Amini	T	6-4	305	29	6	Midwestern State
71	Sirles, Jeremiah	G	6-6	315	27	5	Nebraska
70	Turner, Trai	G	6-3	315	25	5	LSU
73	Van Roten, Greg	C	6-3	305	28	4	Pennsylvania
60	Williams, Daryl	T	6-6	330	26	4	Oklahoma

RUNNING BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
40	Armah, Alex	FB	6-2	255	24	2	West Georgia
34	Artis-Payne, Cameron	RB	5-10	215	28	4	Auburn
22	McCaffrey, Christian	RB	5-11	205	22	2	Stanford
43	Whittaker, Fozzy	RB	5-10	205	29	6	Texas

RECEIVERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
16	Bailey, Rasheed	WR	6-1	210	25	1	Delaware Valley
85	Baylis, Evan	TE	6-6	245	24	1	Oregon
18	Byrd, Damiere	WR	5-9	180	25	3	South Carolina
8	Duke, Austin	WR	5-9	170	25	1	Charlotte
14	Frazier, Mose	WR	5-11	190	25	1	Memphis
17	Funchess, Devin	WR	6-4	225	24	4	Michigan
15	Jones, Jamaal	WR	6-1	190	25	1	Montana
82	Manhertz, Chris	TE	6-6	255	26	3	Canisius
88	Olsen, Greg	TE	6-5	255	33	12	Miami (Fla.)
2	Ross, Fred	WR	6-2	210	23	2	Mississippi State
10	Samuel, Curtis	WR	5-11	195	22	2	Ohio State
19	Shepard, Russell	WR	6-1	195	27	6	LSU
11	Smith, Torrey	WR	6-0	205	29	8	Maryland
86	Taylor, Kent	TE	6-6	240	24	1	UTEP
13	Wright, Jarius	WR	5-10	190	28	7	Arkansas

DEFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
97	Addison, Mario	DE	6-3	260	31	8	Troy
92	Butler, Vernon	DT	6-4	330	24	3	Louisiana Tech
91	Cox Jr., Bryan	DE	6-3	270	24	2	Florida
94	Hall, Daeshon	DE	6-5	265	23	2	Texas A&M
96	Horton, Wes	DE	6-5	265	28	6	USC
79	Iddings, Drew	DT	6-5	290	25	1	South Dakota
93	Love, Kyle	DT	6-1	310	31	7	Mississippi State
77	Moore, Zach	DE	6-6	275	28	2	Concordia (Minn.)
71	Obada, Efe	DE	6-6	265	26	1	None
90	Peppers, Julius	DE	6-7	295	38	17	North Carolina
95	Poe, Dontari	DT	6-3	346	28	7	Memphis
99	Short, Kawann	DT	6-3	315	29	6	Purdue

LINEBACKERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
49	Brown, Richie	LB	6-2	235	24	1	Mississippi State
58	Davis, Thomas	LB	6-1	235	35	14	Georgia
53	Jacobs, Ben	LB	6-4	240	30	5	Fresno State
59	Kuechly, Luke	LB	6-3	238	27	7	Boston College
55	Mayo, David	LB	6-2	245	25	4	Texas State
52	Norris, Jared	LB	6-1	238	25	3	Utah
54	Thompson, Shaq	LB	6-0	230	24	4	Washington

DEFENSIVE BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
29	Adams, Mike	S	5-11	205	37	15	Delaware
24	Bradberry, James	CB	6-1	212	25	3	Samford
47	Cockrell, Ross	CB	6-0	190	27	5	Duke
36	Cox, Demetrious	S	6-0	200	24	2	Michigan State
20	Doss, Lorenzo	CB	5-11	185	24	4	Tulane
35	Elder, Corn	CB	5-10	185	23	1	Miami (Fla.)
23	Gunter, LaDarius	CB	6-2	201	26	4	Miami (Fla.)
42	Jones, Colin	S	6-0	205	30	8	TCU
32	Luke, Cole	CB	5-11	200	23	2	Notre Dame
41	Munnerlyn, Captain	CB	5-9	195	30	10	South Carolina
25	Parms, Damian	S	6-2	210	25	1	Florida Atlantic
33	Sanchez, Zack	CB	5-11	185	24	2	Oklahoma
21	Searcy, Da'Norris	S	5-11	205	29	8	North Carolina
27	Seymour, Kevon	CB	6-0	185	24	3	USC
37	Southward, Dezmen	S	6-2	208	27	4	Wisconsin

SPECIALISTS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9	Gano, Graham	K	6-2	202	31	9	Florida State
44	Jansen, J.J.	LS	6-2	235	32	11	Notre Dame
5	Palardy, Michael	P	5-11	200	26	3	Tennessee

TAMPA BAY
BUCCANEERS

Mike Evans, WR

EVANS: JEFF HAYNES / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
@ New Orleans	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	@ Chicago	@ Atlanta	Cleveland	@ Cincinnati	@ Carolina
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 24 / 8:15 PM	Sept. 30 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 21 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 4 / 1:00 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 5-11 **HOME:** 4-4
CONFERENCE: 3-9 **DIVISION:** 1-5

HEAD COACH **DIRK KOETTER** (THIRD YEAR, 14-18)
CAREER RECORD: 14-18

▶ **ONLINE:** www.buccaneers.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @TBBuccaneers
▶ **TICKETS:** 866-582-2827
▶ **STADIUM:** Raymond James Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 65,890
▶ **TURF:** Grass

Koetter may get cut if the Buccaneers aren't considerably better this year

BY PAT YASINSKAS
Street & Smith's correspondent

4
PREDICTED FINISH **NFC SOUTH**

There really is no other way to frame the picture as the Tampa Bay Buccaneers enter this season. The coach and the general manager might be on the hottest seats in the NFL. And the quarterback isn't far behind. Anything less than a playoff berth could prompt the franchise to clean house.

The Glazer brothers, who own the team, have been patient recently, sticking with general manager Jason Licht and coach Dirk Koetter even though they haven't had a lot of success. But that can't last much longer because it's not in the nature of the Glazers. They fired Lovie Smith and Greg Schiano after each coached two seasons. Surprisingly, they gave Koetter a third year even after he went 5-11 last season. But that just means the pressure on Koetter is enormous.

It's the same story for Licht, who enters his fifth season with the team. He has made some good moves and some bad ones. More importantly, Tampa Bay hasn't made the playoffs under his watch.

Koetter and Licht desperately need fourth-year quarterback Jameis Winston to play at a consistently high level, more production from the running game and improvement from the pass rush

and secondary. If all those things come together, the Bucs likely will make the playoffs and Koetter and Licht will stick around.

Anything short of a playoff berth probably means Koetter and Licht will be gone.

OFFENSE

The Bucs made a change in the offseason, giving wide receivers coach Todd Monken the title of offensive coordinator. There is no doubt Monken will have some say in what the team does on offense. Make no mistake, however, because this remains Koetter's show. He will continue to call the plays. In an ideal world, Koetter likes to pair a strong vertical passing attack with a solid running game. But the Bucs didn't really achieve that last year because Winston's arm strength was somewhat limited while he played through a sore shoulder for a good chunk of the year and the running game was a disappointment. But Koetter will try to get back to his core beliefs.

QUARTERBACKS: The impact of Winston's shoulder injury last year cannot be understated. It limited what he could do and that led to mediocre stats (19 touchdowns, 11 interceptions, 3,504 passing yards). But the fact that Winston tried to play through the shoulder injury before finally taking a three-game break says a lot about him. He's a competitor,

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Jameis Winston
	Ryan Fitzpatrick
FB	Austin Johnson
RB	Ronald Jones II
	Jacquizz Rodgers
LT	Donovan Smith
	Alex Cappa
LG	J.R. Sweezy
	Evan Smith
C	Ryan Jensen
	Evan Smith
RG	Ali Marpet
	Avery Young
RT	Demar Dotson
	Caleb Benenoch
TE	Cameron Brate
	O.J. Howard
WR	DeSean Jackson
	Adam Humphries
WR	Mike Evans
	Chris Godwin

DEFENSE
DE	Jason Pierre-Paul
	Noah Spence
DT	Gerald McCoy
	Mitch Unrein
DT	Vita Vea
	Beau Allen
DE	Vinny Curry
	William Gholston
OLB	Kendell Beckwith
	Devante Bond
MLB	Kwon Alexander
	Adarius Taylor
OLB	Lavonte David
	Cameron Lynch
CB	Vernon Hargreaves
	Carlton Davis
CB	Brent Grimes
	M.J. Stewart
S	Chris Conte
	Justin Evans
S	Keith Tandy
	Josh Robinson

SPECIALISTS
LS	Drew Ferris
P	Bryan Anger
K	Chandler Catanzaro
KR	Jacquizz Rodgers
PR	Adam Humphries

BYE: WEEK 5 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Washington	@ N.Y. Giants	San Francisco	Carolina	New Orleans	@ Baltimore	@ Dallas	Atlanta
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 30 / 1:00 PM

TAMPA BAY **BUCCANEERS**

Jameis Winston, QB

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
26-54

4-12	2-14	6-10	9-7	5-11
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
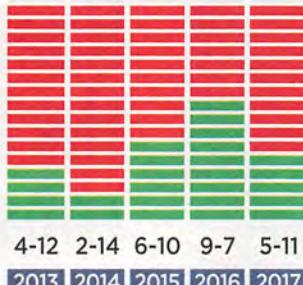
WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

works very hard and goes out of his way in attempting to be a leader. He also has big-time physical skills. That's what makes it so perplexing that Winston hasn't totally put it together in his first three seasons. At times, he looks great. At other times, he makes bad decisions and forces throws. There is a school of thought among personnel men around the league that Winston tries to do too much and that is probably true. The Bucs need to make Winston feel like he doesn't have to carry the team.

RUNNING BACKS: The inconsistent and turbulent era of Doug Martin is over and it was way past time to move on. The Bucs finally did by letting Martin go and drafting Ronald Jones II of USC in the second round. Jones likely becomes the immediate starter in a backfield that has some depth. It's likely the Bucs will use Jones as the primary back on first

and second downs, with Peyton Barber getting a few carries in those situations. But the team has a pair of good third-down backs in Jacquizz Rodgers and Charles Sims. This was a position of weakness last year that should be much stronger.

WIDE RECEIVERS: This should be a position of strength for the Bucs. Mike Evans has a size/speed combination that is as good as anyone's and he has become one of the best receivers in the league. He is also the best weapon on Tampa Bay's offense. On the other side is DeSean Jackson and it's easy to look at his numbers in 2017 (50 catches, 668 yards, 3 TDs) and say he was a disappointment. But that's not necessarily true. Jackson missed two games with injuries and it took time for him to build chemistry with Winston. If that chemistry can continue to improve, Jackson will have a better year.

But the Bucs don't really need him to put up a 1,000-yard season like he has done five times in his career because Evans is going to be the one putting up huge numbers. Jackson's starting job is safe, but the Bucs are very high on second-year pro Chris Godwin and he's likely to get more playing time than he did as a rookie. The team is also very comfortable with Adam Humphries in the slot. But the receiving targets don't end there. Tight ends Cameron Brate and O.J. Howard can both catch the ball, so Koetter is likely to use a lot of sets with two tight ends.

OFFENSIVE LINE: This unit doesn't have any household names, but it wasn't bad last year and should be improved after some offseason tweaks. Donovan Smith and Demar Dotson return as starters and they give the Bucs a solid pair of bookend tackles. The changes will come in the interior. Ali Marpet was

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Buccaneers

"When it comes right down to it, it really is all about (Jameis) Winston. If he plays well, this team will win a fair amount of games. If not, they're in trouble. They say you're supposed to know if a quarterback has it after two years, but I still don't have a real good feel either way on Winston. He's up and he's down. They've done pretty much everything possible to give him a strong supporting cast. Now, there can't be anymore excuses. ... I know Mike Smith likes to get just about all his pass rush from the front four

and it's great that they went out and got good pass rushers. But seriously, I think he has to blitz at least once in a while. **Lavonte David** is too good of an athlete not to give him a shot at a quarterback every now and then. ... If I'm calling the offensive plays against them, I'm going straight after their cornerbacks and seeing what they have. Brent Grimes has been a good player for a long time, but you need to test him to see if his age is showing up. And I haven't seen anything good out of (Vernon) Hargreaves. I'll say one of those rookie corners will be starting by the middle of the season."

↘ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/17	W	29-7	Chicago Bears
09/24	L	17-34	Minnesota Vikings
10/01	W	25-23	New York Giants
10/05	L	14-19	New England Patriots
10/15	L	33-38	Arizona Cardinals
10/22	L	27-30	Buffalo Bills
10/29	L	3-17	Carolina Panthers
11/05	L	10-30	New Orleans Saints
11/12	W	15-10	New York Jets
11/19	W	30-20	Miami Dolphins
11/26	L	20-34	Atlanta Falcons
12/03	L	20-26	Green Bay Packers
12/10	L	21-24	Detroit Lions
12/18	L	21-24	Atlanta Falcons
12/24	L	19-22	Carolina Panthers
12/31	W	31-24	New Orleans Saints

2017 RECORD: 5-11

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Martin	138	406	2.9	27	3
Barber	108	423	3.9	34	3
Rodgers	64	244	3.8	36	1
Winston	33	135	4.1	17	1
Sims	21	95	4.5	21	0
Fitzpatrick	15	78	5.2	15	0
Jackson	3	38	12.7	23	0
Reedy	3	17	5.7	10	0
Wilson	3	8	2.7	8	0
Humphries	1	6	6.0	6	0
TAMPA BAY	389	1,450	3.7	36	8
OPPONENTS	440	1,880	4.3	69	17

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Evans	71	1,001	14.1	42t	5
Humphries	61	631	10.3	43	1
Jackson	50	668	13.4	41	3
Brate	48	591	12.3	35	6
Sims	35	249	7.1	25	1
Godwin	34	525	15.4	70	1
O.J. Howard	26	432	16.6	58t	6
Barber	16	114	7.1	34	0
Martin	9	84	9.3	17	0
Rodgers	9	74	8.2	15	0
Martino	5	96	19.2	39	0
Cross	5	58	11.6	23	0
Stocker	3	18	6.0	8t	1
Auclair	2	25	12.5	14	0
Reedy	2	21	10.5	15	0
Wilson	1	18	18.0	18t	1
Wester	1	2	2.0	2t	1
TAMPA BAY	378	4,607	12.2	70	26
OPPONENTS	371	4,306	11.6	61t	22

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Winston	442	282	3,504	19	11
Fitzpatrick	163	96	1,103	7	3
TAMPA BAY	605	378	4,366	26	14
OPPONENTS	549	371	4,169	22	13

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Rodgers	11	255	23.2	45	0
Reedy	7	145	20.7	50	0
Sims	2	32	16.0	19	0
TAMPA BAY	20	432	21.6	50	0
OPPONENTS	47	1,167	24.8	106t	2

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Reedy	14	143	10.2	44	0
Humphries	6	49	8.2	19	0
TAMPA BAY	20	192	9.6	44	0
OPPONENTS	27	153	5.7	40	0

SACKS   TAMPA BAY 22.0, OPPONENTS 40.0

McCoy 6.0, McDonald 5.0, Clarke 2.5, Ayers 2.0, Russell 2.0, Beckwith 1.0, Glanton 1.0, Spence 1.0, Tapp 1.0, Baker 0.5

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	363.5	9
Rushing	90.6	27
Passing	272.9	4
Scoring	20.9	19
Punt returns	9.6	6
Kick returns	21.6	17
Red zone TD%	49.1	24
Total defense	378.1	32
Against rush	117.5	23
Against pass	260.6	32
Points allowed	23.9	22t
Interceptions	13	15t
Sacks	22.0	32
Turnover diff.	-1	16t

the center last year and was decent at the position, but the Bucs have moved him to right guard and will go with Ryan Jensen at center. J.R. Sweezy will start at left guard. Veteran Evan Smith, a former starter, gives the Bucs solid depth at all three interior positions.

DEFENSE

It's hard to summarize Tampa Bay's defense from last year because it was never able to establish a true identity. The pass rush was terrible, key linebackers missed substantial time with injuries and the secondary wasn't very reliable. That's not the kind of defense you expect from coordinator Mike Smith. In previous stops as a head coach and defensive coordinator, he had a lot of success. But don't expect Smith to panic and suddenly make massive changes to the scheme. As a head coach in Atlanta, he was stubborn—too stubborn—at times. Smith will stick with what he believes in. That means a pass rush generated mostly by the front four, linebackers who can stop the run but also drop into coverage and a secondary that doesn't give up big plays.

DEFENSIVE LINE: After generating a league-low 22.0 sacks last season, this unit needed to be blown up and that's exactly what the Bucs did. If all goes according to plan, they'll have three new starters on the defensive line on opening day. The biggest move came in a major trade with the New York Giants that brought them

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Tampa Bay head coach Dirk Koetter

Koetter has a strong offensive background and is known for his ability to get the most out of his quarterbacks. But Koetter's offense has yet to really click in Tampa Bay and Jameis Winston has been inconsistent. A large part of the blame for Winston's play being up and down is Koetter's system and playcalling. Koetter loves the downfield, vertical passing game and there is nothing wrong with that. But that means Winston is asked to make a lot of very difficult throws. Koetter could make Winston's life a little easier by reducing that degree of difficulty. Koetter can also help Winston out by running the ball more often than last year. Now that the Bucs have a fresh and talented back in rookie Ronald Jones II, that should be possible. Koetter has nearly complete control over the offense, but when it comes to defense, he stays out of the way and leaves that up to coordinator Mike Smith. The two men have total respect for each other because Koetter was the offensive coordinator in Atlanta when Smith was the head coach there.

TAMPA BAY **BUCCANEERS**

Jason Pierre-Paul. There are some around the league who think Pierre-Paul is near the end of his career. But the Bucs don't fall into that category. Pierre-Paul still is relatively young at 29 and had 8.5 sacks last year. The team also brought in Vinny Curry from Philadelphia to take over on the other side. The organization is also hoping end Noah Spence can return from an injury that kept him out most of last year and give the team another good pass rusher. After making the moves on the outside, it seemed like the overhaul of the line was over, but the Bucs surprised a lot of people by taking tackle Vita Vea with the No. 12 overall pick in the draft. That was clearly a case of the Bucs taking the guy they felt was the best available player and not fixating on a need position. Vea is massive and should be an efficient run-stopper, but he won't be limited to that. He also has surprising quickness and can generate a push in the pass rush. Of course, Vea should benefit from playing next to Pro Bowler Gerald McCoy, who has been the best player on this defense for years.

LINEBACKERS: After McCoy, linebackers Lavonte David and Kwon Alexander are the two best players on the Tampa Bay defense, but they weren't nearly as productive as the Bucs would have liked last season. Part of that was

due to injury. David missed three games and Alexander missed four. Somewhat shockingly, David did not have a sack or an interception. That should never happen to a player with his playmaking skills. Alexander was only slightly more productive, coming up with three interceptions but no sacks. Kendell Beckwith should be the other starting linebacker if he makes a full recovery from ankle surgery after being involved in an automobile accident in the offseason.

SECONDARY: The defensive backfield has pretty much an entirely new look after the draft and that's a good thing because the Bucs allowed a league-worst 4,169 passing yards last year. Brent Grimes still is the team's top cornerback, but he'll be 35 this season. The team is also hoping former first-round pick Vernon Hargreaves will play to the potential that first made him an attractive prospect. Hargreaves struggled on the outside last year. At times, the team moved him inside and used Ryan Smith as an outside corner. But the Bucs made it clear that Grimes is nearing the end of the road and Hargreaves may never develop when they used two second-round picks on a pair of cornerbacks. Those rookies, M.J. Stewart and Carlton Davis, could see the field quickly if Grimes shows signs of age or Hargreaves struggles. Chris Conte

The Bucs have a fair amount of newcomers expected to make significant impacts, but **Jason Pierre-Paul** is the one who should make the most noise. He's been an elite pass rusher much of his career and is still in his prime. Tampa Bay is desperate for a pass rush. Pierre-Paul should go a long way toward fixing that problem and his presence will make the rest of the defense better.

should be one starting safety and the other job is up for grabs with Keith Tandy being the early favorite because of his experience.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The kicking game has been a disaster for the Bucs and they can't go through more of the same. That's why they brought in Chandler Cantazaro, who made 83.3 percent of his field goals for the New York Jets last season. Things have been much more stable at punter, where the Bucs have veteran Bryan Anger. He has averaged no less than 44.0 yards a punt since entering the league in 2012. The Bucs will take a look at some of their young players in the return game. If they're not impressed, they can always fall back on Humphries and Rodgers.

BOTTOM LINE

This team needs to win now or else that will mean the end for Koetter and Licht in Tampa Bay. There is a decent chance, however, that will happen. Licht has finally assembled a roster that doesn't appear to have any major holes. He used the offseason to address all the problem spots: the running game, the pass rush and the secondary. Now, it's up to Koetter to make all that talent work and win games. That's easier said than done in the NFC South. But this might be the year the Bucs surprise some people.

THE LAST TIME ...

... (and only time) the Buccaneers had a wide receiver pile up at least 1,400 yards in a season **was 1989 when Mark Carrier hauled in 86 passes for 1,422 yards.** Carrier also scored nine touchdowns—a franchise record at the time that stood for 16 years—en route to earning the only Pro Bowl berth of his 12-year career.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C+
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **DE** Jason Pierre-Paul
  (trade, N.Y. Giants)
- **DE** Vinny Curry
  (free agent, Philadelphia)
- **C** Ryan Jensen
  (free agent, Baltimore)
- **K** Chandler Catanzaro
  (free agent, N.Y. Jets)
- **DT** Mitch Unrein
  (free agent, Chicago)
- **DT** Beau Allen
  (free agent, Philadelphia)

Vinny Curry

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

Due to some shrewd moves by general manager Jason Licht, the Bucs had three second-round picks and used them to fill major needs. Ronald Jones II should be the immediate starter at running back and the Bucs believe his rushing ability will take the pressure off of Jameis Winston. M.J. Stewart and Carlton Davis also came in the second round and should solidify a secondary that has an aging Brent Grimes and not much else at cornerback. Although Licht went strictly for need in the second round, he followed a completely different philosophy in the first round. The Bucs didn't really need a defensive tackle, but **Vita Vea** was at the top of the draft board and the Bucs decided not to pass. In the third round, the Bucs took Division 2 offensive lineman Alex Cappa. No one is sure if he should play inside or outside. Fortunately, the Bucs don't have to make that decision right away because Cappa isn't likely to play immediately.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
A

THE BUCCANEERS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	12	Vita Vea	DT	6-4	347	23	Washington
2	38	Ronald Jones II	RB	5-11	208	21	USC
2	53	M.J. Stewart	CB	5-11	200	22	North Carolina
2	63	Carlton Davis	CB	6-1	206	21	Auburn
3	94	Alex Cappa	OL	6-6	305	22	Humboldt State
4	117	Jordan Whitehead	S	5-10	198	21	Pittsburgh
5	144	Justin Watson	WR	6-3	215	22	Pennsylvania
6	202	Jack Cichy	LB	6-2	234	22	Wisconsin

VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF *as of May 1*

COACHES: Dirk Koetter, **Head Coach;** Todd Monken, **Offensive Coordinator;** Mike Smith, **Defensive Coordinator;** Nate Kaczor, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
14	Fitzpatrick, Ryan	QB	6-2	223	35	14	Harvard
4	Griffin, Ryan	QB	6-5	210	28	5	Tulane
3	Winston, Jameis	QB	6-4	231	24	4	Florida State

OFFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
77	Benenoch, Caleb	OL	6-5	305	24	3	UCLA
69	Dotson, Demar	T	6-9	315	32	10	Southern Miss
68	Gardner, Cole	T	6-6	302	24	2	Eastern Michigan
72	Gettis, Adam	G	6-3	315	29	6	Iowa
66	Jensen, Ryan	C	6-4	319	27	5	Colorado State-Pueblo
67	Liedtke, Michael	OL	6-3	310	26	1	Illinois State
74	Marpet, Ali	G/C	6-4	307	25	4	Hobart
78	Price, Givens	T	6-4	310	23	1	Nebraska
60	Seaton, Brad	T	6-8	325	24	1	Villanova
76	Smith, Donovan	T	6-6	338	25	4	Penn State
62	Smith, Evan	C	6-2	308	32	9	Idaho State
73	Sweezy, J.R.	G	6-5	298	29	7	N.C. State
61	Wester, Leonard	T	6-6	305	25	3	Missouri Western
70	Young, Avery	OL	6-5	326	25	1	Auburn

RUNNING BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
25	Barber, Peyton	RB	5-11	225	24	3	Auburn
44	Crossan, Dalton	RB	5-11	203	24	1	New Hampshire
46	Johnson, Austin	FB	6-2	240	29	3	Tennessee
32	Rodgers, Jacquizz	RB	5-7	190	28	8	Oregon State
34	Sims, Charles	RB	6-0	211	27	5	West Virginia

RECEIVERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
82	Auclair, Antony	TE	6-5	256	25	2	Laval (Canada)
84	Brate, Cameron	TE	6-5	235	27	4	Harvard
45	Cross, Alan	TE	6-1	235	25	3	Memphis
13	Evans, Mike	WR	6-5	231	25	5	Texas A&M
12	Godwin, Chris	WR	6-1	209	22	2	Penn State
80	Howard, O.J.	TE	6-6	250	23	2	Alabama
10	Humphries, Adam	WR	5-11	195	25	4	Clemson
11	Jackson, DeSean	WR	5-10	175	31	11	California
19	Lampman, Jake	WR	6-0	205	25	2	Ferris State
15	Lucien, Devin	WR	6-2	200	25	1	Arizona State
16	Martino, Freddie	WR	6-0	195	27	3	North Greenville (S.C.)
85	Wilson, Bobo	WR	5-9	186	23	1	Florida State

DEFENSIVE LINE			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
91	Allen, Beau	DT	6-3	327	26	5	Wisconsin
94	Clarke, Will	DE	6-6	275	27	5	West Virginia
97	Curry, Vinny	DE	6-3	279	30	7	Marshall
92	Gholston, William	DE	6-6	281	27	6	Michigan State
75	Lambert, DaVonte	DL	6-2	282	24	3	Auburn
93	McCoy, Gerald	DT	6-4	300	30	9	Oklahoma
79	O'Connor, Patrick	DE	6-4	270	24	1	Eastern Michigan
90	Pierre-Paul, Jason	DE	6-5	275	29	9	South Florida
57	Spence, Noah	DE	6-2	251	24	3	Eastern Kentucky
96	Tu'ikolovatu, Stevie	DT	6-1	320	27	2	USC
98	Unrein, Mitch	DT	6-4	301	31	8	Wyoming
71	Ward, Channing	DE	6-4	279	25	2	Ole Miss

LINEBACKERS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
58	Alexander, Kwon	LB	6-1	227	24	4	LSU
51	Beckwith, Kendell	LB	6-3	247	23	2	LSU
59	Bond, Devante	LB	6-1	236	25	3	Oklahoma
49	Bullough, Riley	LB	6-2	228	24	1	Michigan State
54	David, Lavonte	LB	6-1	233	28	7	Nebraska
52	Harris, Nigel	LB	6-2	225	23	2	South Florida
56	Knox, Jeff	LB	6-2	225	26	1	California (Pa.)
43	Lynch, Cameron	LB	6-0	229	25	4	Syracuse
50	Nzeocha, Eric	LB	6-3	218	25	1	Wyoming
53	Taylor, Adarius	LB	6-1	230	27	4	Florida Atlantic

DEFENSIVE BACKS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
23	Conte, Chris	S	6-2	203	29	8	California
35	Elliott, Javien	CB	5-11	176	25	3	Florida State
21	Evans, Justin	S	6-1	195	23	2	Texas A&M
30	Fleming, Maurice	CB	5-11	202	24	1	West Virginia
24	Grimes, Brent	CB	5-10	185	35	12	Shippensburg
28	Hargreaves III, Vernon	CB	5-10	205	23	3	Florida
39	Johnson, Isaiah	S	6-0	213	25	1	South Carolina
27	Rivers, David	CB	6-0	185	24	1	Youngstown State
26	Robinson, Josh	DB	5-10	199	27	7	UCF
29	Smith, Ryan	CB	6-0	190	25	3	North Carolina Central
37	Tandy, Keith	S	5-10	205	29	7	West Virginia

SPECIALISTS			HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9	Anger, Bryan	P	6-3	205	29	7	California
7	Catanzaro, Chandler	K	6-3	200	27	5	Clemson
48	Ferris, Drew	LS	6-0	230	26	1	Florida

LOS ANGELES
RAMS

Todd Gurley, RB

GURLEY: BRUCE KLUCKHOHN / AP

⬇ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
@ Oakland	Arizona	L.A. Chargers	Minnesota	@ Seattle	@ Denver	@ San Francisco	Green Bay
Sept. 10 / 10:20 PM	Sept. 16 / 4:05 PM	Sept. 23 / 4:05 PM	Sept. 27 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 7 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 14 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 21 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 28 / 4:25 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 11-5 **HOME:** 4-4
CONFERENCE: 7-5 **DIVISION:** 4-2

HEAD COACH **SEAN MCVAY** (SECOND YEAR, 11-5)
CAREER RECORD: 11-5

▶ **ONLINE:** www.therams.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @RamsNFL
▶ **TICKETS:** 818-338-0011
▶ **STADIUM:** Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum
▶ **CAPACITY:** 93,607
▶ **TURF:** Grass

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Jared Goff
	Sean Mannion
FB	Sam Rogers
RB	Todd Gurley
	Malcolm Brown
LT	Andrew Whitworth
	Joseph Noteboom
LG	Rodger Saffold
	Aaron Neary
C	John Sullivan
	Austin Blythe
RG	Jamon Brown
	Jake Eldrenkamp
RT	Rob Havenstein
	Darrell Williams
TE	Gerald Everett
	Tyler Higbee
WR	Cooper Kupp
	Robert Woods
WR	Brandin Cooks
	Pharoh Cooper

DEFENSE

DE	Michael Brockers
	Ethan Westbrooks
DT	Ndamukong Suh
	Omarius Bryant
DT	Aaron Donald
	Dominique Easley
OLB	Matt Longacre
	Carlos Thompson
ILB	Cory Littleton
	Ramik Wilson
ILB	Mark Barron
	Bryce Hager
OLB	Samson Ebukam
	Garrett Sickels
CB	Aqib Talib
	Kevin Peterson
CB	Marcus Peters
	Troy Hill
SS	John Johnson III
	Blake Countess
FS	Lamarcus Joyner
	Marqui Christian

SPECIALISTS

LS	Jake McQuaide
P	Johnny Hekker
K	Greg Zuerlein
KR	Pharoh Cooper
PR	Cooper Kupp

Last year was no fluke—the Rams are very good and have the Super Bowl in their sights

BY PAT YASINSKAS
Street & Smith's correspondent

If you looked solely at what the Los Angeles Rams have done this offseason, you would think they were coming off something like a 5-11 season. They look like a team in full rebuilding mode and may have been more active in swapping out personnel than any franchise in the league.

But that simply is not the case. This isn't a team that's rebuilding. It's a team that's going all-out because general manager Les Snead and coach Sean McVay sense there is a window open to win a Super Bowl—maybe several Super Bowls. This is a team coming off an 11-5 campaign in which running back Todd Gurley, quarterback Jared Goff and defensive tackle Aaron Donald—all age 26 or younger last season—emerged as a very solid nucleus.

The Rams probably could have sat back and been a contender the next few years. But Snead and McVay, who is only 32, aren't the type to sit back. Instead they went on a huge shopping spree, acquiring big names like Ndamukong Suh, Aqib Talib, Brandin Cooks and Marcus Peters to try to fill the few holes that were evident last season. If those moves work

1 PREDICTED FINISH NFC WEST

out, the Rams are very legitimate Super Bowl contenders, even favorites.

OFFENSE

With McVay arriving last year with a reputation as an offensive guru, the Rams made history. They became the first team ever to go from last in the league in points scored in one season to first in the league the next. They scored just 224 points in 2016, but that number jumped to 478 last year. Give much of the credit to McVay, former offensive coordinator Matt LaFleur and ex-quarterbacks coach Greg Olson. There was some luck involved, but the main reason for the turnaround was the play of Goff, who went from a shaky performance as a rookie in 2016 to being one of the NFL's most efficient quarterbacks last season. The Rams now have given Goff a deep threat in Cooks and the presence of Gurley in the running game means defenses will be kept honest.

QUARTERBACKS: Goff might have been the most improved player in the league last year and the most telling statistics were that he threw for 28 touchdowns with only seven interceptions and a 62.1 completion percentage. In other words, he didn't make a lot of mistakes. Goff made the Pro Bowl and showed that the Rams will have a franchise quarterback for the next decade or so. But the coaches aren't content to let Goff stand still. They

BYE: WEEK 12 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *Mexico City

Week 9	**Week 10**	**Week 11**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
@ New Orleans Nov. 4 / 4:25 PM	Seattle Nov. 11 / 4:25 PM	Kansas City* Nov. 19 / 8:15 PM	@ Detroit Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	@ Chicago Dec. 9 / 1:00 PM	Philadelphia Dec. 16 / 8:20 PM	@ Arizona Dec. 23 / 4:05 PM	San Francisco Dec. 30 / 4:25 PM

LOS ANGELES **RAMS**

Jared Goff, QB

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
35-45

7-9	6-10	7-9	4-12	11-5
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

believe he can be one of the league's best quarterbacks and the next step is to make him more prolific. Goff threw for 3,804 yards last year. That's a respectable number, especially when you consider the offense also depends on Gurley to get his fair share of yards in the running game. But the coaches believe Goff easily can get his yardage total above 4,000 yards and they think Cooks gives him the final piece in the passing game. But it's critical that Goff stays healthy because backup Sean Mannion has made only one start in his NFL career.

RUNNING BACKS: It's extremely important to note that Goff's season would not have been possible without a career year from Gurley, who ended up as the NFL's Offensive Player of the Year. Gurley was–by far–the most well-rounded running back in the league and the best news of all might be that he will

be just 24 when the season begins. Gurley was a workhorse last year and that's not going to change. He rushed for 1,305 yards and averaged 4.7 yards a carry last season while rushing for 13 touchdowns. That alone makes him a big force, but Gurley brings more to the table than just his ability to run the ball. With the arrival of McVay's offense, Gurley suddenly was expected to become a prominent factor in the passing game. That worked out well as he caught 64 passes for 788 yards and six touchdowns. If it sounds like Gurley is a one-man show in the backfield, that's only because he pretty much is. The Rams do like the potential of backup Malcolm Brown, but he carried the ball only 63 times for 246 yards last year.

RECEIVERS: When McVay arrived last year, he and the GM, Snead, believed Sammy Watkins could be a big-time deep threat. But that never really worked

out and they allowed Watkins to leave for Kansas City as a free agent in the offseason. But the flip side to letting Watkins go could be what the franchise sees as a significant upgrade that could provide help for Goff. The team traded its first-round pick in this year's draft to New England to bring in Cooks. He is more of a speedster and deep threat than Watkins. The Rams believe Cooks can improve on last season's New England numbers (65 catches, 1,082 yards, 7 touchdowns) because he'll be the featured receiver in this offense. But Cooks won't have to carry the passing game. Receiver is one of the deepest positions on the roster. Robert Woods, Cooper Kupp, Pharoh Cooper, Josh Reynolds and Mike Thomas are all capable wideouts and the competition for the final roster spots should be intense in training camp.

In his last job as offensive coordinator

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Rams

"I wasn't so sure about (Jared) Goff when he came out in the draft and my doubts were even bigger after his rookie year. But I became a believer last year. At first, he showed he could manage a game. Then, he started to show signs that he can be a franchise quarterback. Now, I truly believe he can be a franchise quarterback and that means the Rams are going to be set at that position for a very long time. Goff has plenty of talent, but the biggest thing he has going for him is (Sean) McVay, who knows how to use that talent. ... Things suddenly got a lot easier for

Goff and (Todd) Gurley when they brought in (Brandin) Cooks. He's going to stretch the field and give them a deep threat. That means the running game and short passing game will be better than they already were. Their offensive line isn't bad by any means but it has a couple of guys that are getting older and you have to wonder if that might catch up to them. ... I love the fact they brought in (Ndamukong) Suh and are putting him next to **(Aaron) Donald**. That's an incredible combination and they're going to be able to do all sorts of stuff. Plus, I think Suh will be highly motivated because he'll have the chance to play for a team that could be a winner."

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	W	46-9	Indianapolis Colts
09/17	L	20-27	Washington Redskins
09/21	W	41-39	San Francisco 49ers
10/01	W	35-30	Dallas Cowboys
10/08	L	10-16	Seattle Seahawks
10/15	W	27-17	Jacksonville Jaguars
10/22	W	33-0	Arizona Cardinals
11/05	W	51-17	New York Giants
11/12	W	33-7	Houston Texans
11/19	L	7-24	Minnesota Vikings
11/26	W	26-20	New Orleans Saints
12/03	W	32-16	Arizona Cardinals
12/10	L	35-43	Philadelphia Eagles
12/17	W	42-7	Seattle Seahawks
12/24	W	27-23	Tennessee Titans
12/31	L	13-34	San Francisco 49ers

2017 RECORD: 11-5

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Gurley	279	1,305	4.7	57t	13
Brown	63	246	3.9	20	1
Austin	59	270	4.6	27t	1
Goff	28	51	1.8	22	1
Dunbar	11	51	4.6	12	1
Mannion	9	-2	-0.2	3	0
Woods	2	12	6.0	8	0
Everett	1	13	13.0	13	0
Cooper	1	6	6.0	6	0
Davis	1	1	1.0	1	0
LOS ANGELES	454	1,953	4.3	57t	17
OPPONENTS	417	1,957	4.7	75t	15

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Gurley	64	788	12.3	80t	6
Kupp	62	869	14.0	64	5
Woods	56	781	13.9	94t	5
Watkins	39	593	15.2	67t	8
Higbee	25	295	11.8	38	1
Everett	16	244	15.3	69	2
Austin	13	47	3.6	13	0
Reynolds	11	104	9.5	28	1
Cooper	11	84	7.6	26	0
Brown	9	53	5.9	16	0
Carrier	8	71	8.9	17	0
Thomas	5	93	18.6	50	0
Dunbar	1	1	1.0	1	0
LOS ANGELES	320	4,023	12.6	94t	28
OPPONENTS	324	3,799	11.7	65t	21

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Goff	477	296	3,804	28	7
Mannion	37	22	185	0	0
Hekker	3	2	34	0	0
Kupp	1	0	0	0	0
LOS ANGELES	518	320	3,831	28	7
OPPONENTS	555	324	3,475	21	18

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Cooper	34	932	27.4	103t	1
Carrier	3	41	13.7	14	0
Thomas	1	15	15.0	15	0
Austin	1	13	13.0	13	0
Longacre	1	0	0.0	0	0
LOS ANGELES	40	1,001	25.0	103t	1
OPPONENTS	23	520	22.6	57	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Cooper	32	399	12.5	53	0
Austin	12	53	4.4	12	0
Johnson	1	6	6.0	6	0
LOS ANGELES	45	458	10.2	53	0
OPPONENTS	25	152	6.1	18	0

SACKS	LOS ANGELES 48.0, OPPONENTS 28.0

Donald 11.0, Quinn 8.5, Longacre 5.5, Barwin 5.0, Brockers 4.5, Westbrooks 4.0, Fox 2.5, Ebukam 2.0, Ogletree 2.0, Barron 1.0, Littleton 1.0, Walker 1.0

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	361.5	10
Rushing	122.1	8
Passing	239.4	10
Scoring	29.9	1
Punt returns	10.2	4
Kick returns	25.0	2
Red zone TD%	53.4	17
Total defense	339.5	19
Against rush	122.3	28
Against pass	217.2	13
Points allowed	20.6	12
Interceptions	18	6t
Sacks	48.0	4
Turnover diff.	+7	9t

in Washington, McVay made heavy use of the tight ends in the passing game. But the tight ends didn't produce much as receivers for Los Angeles last year. The Rams are hoping Gerald Everett can step up and be a threat in the red zone.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The good news is that an offensive line that helped Gurley and Goff have such big years returns intact. Left tackle Andrew Whitworth, left guard Rodger Saffold, center John Sullivan, right guard Jamon Brown and right tackle Rob Havenstein form an above-average unit that should be good for one more year. But that's where the bad news comes in. Although pretty much all of the rest of the team is built for the long term, that isn't the case with the O-line. The status quo basically has one year left. Whitworth and Sullivan are near the ends of their careers, while Saffold, Brown and Havenstein are in the final year of their contracts.

DEFENSE

Coordinator Wade Phillips is 71 and he already has assured himself a spot among the greatest defensive minds in NFL history. But it's possible Phillips' legacy could be enhanced even further. The defense he is putting on the field this year just might end up being the best he has ever coached. He already had the reigning Defensive Player of the Year in Aaron Donald. Even though the shopping spree was impressive on the offensive side of the ball, it was significantly more aggressive on the defensive side. The Rams brought in big names like defensive tackle Suh and cornerbacks Talib and Peters. Although the Rams aren't great at linebacker, their extraordinary talent on the line and in the secondary will make it very difficult to run or pass on them.

DEFENSIVE LINE: With Suh and Donald, the Rams have something no team in history has had. They now have two defensive tackles who each have been All-Pro at least three times. Donald and Suh are as good as it gets. They are run stuffers and pass rushers and they're going to make everyone on the line better. Suh will play mostly at nose tackle but will move around some to give offenses headaches. Third-down specialist Michael Brockers is good enough to start for just about any team. Much of the pass rush will

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Los Angeles head coach Sean McVay

When McVay was hired as the head coach last year, there were a ton of skeptics. They said he was too young and wouldn't be able to turn around a team that had been dismal the previous season. Instead, McVay turned out to be one of the brightest young minds in the coaching game. His background is on offense and it's not wrong to call him an offensive guru. Coming from his previous job as a coordinator for Washington, McVay clicked with Jared Goff immediately and turned the young quarterback's career around—and that process isn't over. With the arrival of Brandin Cooks, the Rams will have the deep threat they lacked last year and you can bet they'll make heavy use of it. But McVay isn't just about the passing game. He knows he has perhaps the best runner in the NFL in Todd Gurley and that means his offense is always going to be balanced. One of McVay's best qualities is that he sticks to his strength. Wisely, he leaves the defense up to Wade Phillips, who gets a lot of help from linebackers coach/assistant head coach Joe Barry. McVay lets them run the show, but he's more than willing to make sure they have everything they need as evidenced by what L.A. has done this offseason.

LOS ANGELES **RAMS**

come from the interior. But the Rams are hoping to bring strong pressure from the outside in the form of Dominique Easley. He has a history of injury problems and is coming off a torn ACL, but he can be an above-average pass rusher when healthy.

LINEBACKERS: This group forms what is—by far—the weakest unit on the team. Inside linebacker Alec Ogletree was reliable and a two-time captain, but he was traded to the New York Giants. That leaves a major void in the middle of the 3-4 defense and there is no obvious successor in place. Special-teams ace Cory Littleton is one possibility, but he will be competing during training camp with Ramik Wilson, who was brought in from Kansas City in the offseason. Veteran Mark Barron is a solid but far from spectacular player at the other inside position. The outside spots may be even bigger areas of concern after the Rams let go of last year's starters—Robert Quinn and Connor Barwin. Both were solid pass rushers and will be difficult to replace. Samson Ebukam, who showed spurts of ability as a pass rusher last season, likely will get a shot at a starting job. Matt Longacre was a reliable backup for Quinn, but it remains to be seen if he can handle a full-time starting role.

SECONDARY: The Rams headed into the offseason knowing they had to upgrade their secondary for this defense to be elite. At least on paper, they accomplished that mission. Talib has a mercurial personality, but he is one of the top cover corners in the league and Peters isn't far behind. Talib and Peters have combined for seven Pro Bowl berths. Throw in Nickell Robey-Coleman, who is one of the league's best slot corners, and the Rams might have the best cornerback situation in the league. Plus, there also is at least a possibility that L.A. can get something out of former Pro Bowler Sam Shields, who has missed most of the last two seasons with concussion issues. The safety position isn't quite as loaded, but it's not far off. Lamarcus Joyner quickly emerged as one of the league's top safeties in his first year playing the position and John Johnson III has a bright future. On its own merits, this secondary should be very good. If the pass rush lives up to its potential, then it could be truly special.

SPECIAL TEAMS: John Fassel is one of the few special-teams coordinators to have a trifecta on his resume. While with Oakland in 2011, he helped kicker Sebastian Janikowski, punter Shane Lechler and long snapper Jon Condo reach the Pro Bowl. And Fassel isn't short on talent in L.A. Greg Zuerlein has been a reliable kicker since entering the league in 2012, but he's coming off a career season in 2017. And we're not just talking a career year by Zuerlein's standards. We're talking a career year by anyone's standards. Zuerlein converted 38 of 40 field goals and, at 30, is in the prime of his career. Punter Johnny Hekker joined the Rams in the same season as Zuerlein and

IMPACT NEWCOMER

Most of the talk about the upgrades on defense have centered on Ndamukong Suh and Aqib Talib, and that probably is the way it should be. But the arrival of **Marcus Peters** is just as big a deal. Pairing him with Talib might give the Rams the best cornerback tandem in the league. Since entering the NFL in 2015, Peters leads the league with 19 interceptions. Put him opposite Talib and behind a great defensive line and he can have an even greater impact.

the two give the team a nice combination of specialists. Hekker has averaged better than 47 yards per punt in each of the last three seasons. The return game isn't quite decided because it will depend largely on who makes the team at wide receiver. But there are multiple players there who have return skills, led by Cooper.

BOTTOM LINE

In a lot of ways, the Rams are young and should be good for the long term. But Snead and McVay know that nothing is guaranteed. In the offseason, they looked at their roster and decided it might be only a few players away from a Super Bowl. So, they went all-in and got the few players they think they need to make it happen. That sounds like a great plan. But loading up on big names doesn't always lead to success. Although it's easy to say the Rams should improve on last year, they'll have one big thing working against them: Opponents no longer will take them lightly. They will get everyone's best shot. If they're going to survive that and get to the Super Bowl, they need the big-name acquisitions to live up to their reputations and Goff and Gurley to continue to be among the best young players in the league at their positions. There is no reason why the Rams shouldn't win the division. If everything breaks right, they should be a Super Bowl team.

2018 TEAM GRADE: A
2018 STOCKWATCH: BUY

THE LAST TIME ...
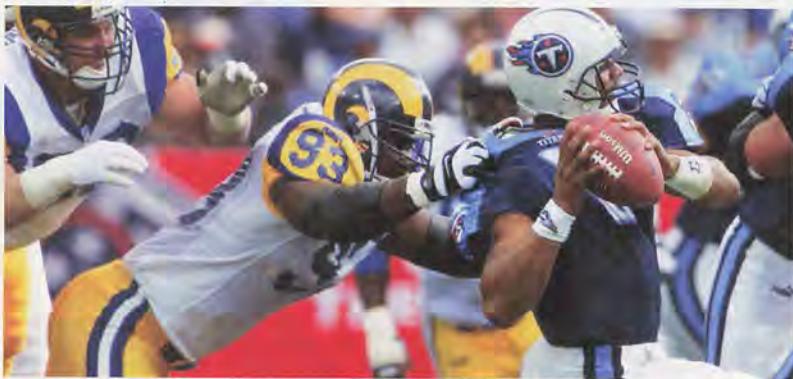
... a Rams player led the NFL in sacks was in 1999 when Kevin Carter took opposing quarterbacks to the ground 17.0 times. Carter wreaked havoc during his six seasons in St. Louis, notching 62.5 sacks for the franchise. Carter's monstrous 1999 campaign included five games with multiple sacks, and he recorded one sack in each of the Rams' three playoff games, including the 23-16 win over the Titans in Super Bowl XXXIV.

↘ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **DT** Ndamukong Suh (free agent, Miami)
- **CB** Aqib Talib (trade, Denver)
- **CB** Marcus Peters (trade, Kansas City)
- **ILB** Ramik Wilson (free agent, Kansas City)
- **CB** Sam Shields (free agent, Green Bay)
- **WR** Brandin Cooks (trade, New England)

NFL DRAFT

THE DRAFT REPORT

The defensive shopping spree for veterans essentially was the Rams' draft. They didn't have a pick in the first two rounds, but the veteran acquisitions will play right away. The rookie class probably won't contribute much this year. But third-round selection **Joseph Noteboom** of TCU was a wise pick with an eye toward the future. The offensive line is getting older and Noteboom, who can play both tackle positions, might be a starter by his second season.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
C-

Ndamukong Suh

↘ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Sean McVay, **Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator;** Wade Phillips, **Defensive Coordinator;** John Fassel, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
8 Allen, Brandon	QB	6-2	214	26	3	Arkansas
16 Goff, Jared	QB	6-4	223	23	3	California
14 Mannion, Sean	QB	6-6	231	26	4	Oregon State

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
66 Blythe, Austin	C	6-3	300	26	3	Iowa
68 Brown, Jamon	G	6-4	330	25	4	Louisville
71 Dunn, Michael	OL	6-5	300	24	0	Maryland
60 Eldrenkamp, Jake	C	6-5	300	24	1	Washington
79 Havenstein, Rob	T	6-8	328	26	4	Wisconsin
73 Lucas, Cornelius	T	6-9	330	27	5	Kansas State
72 Neary, Aaron	C/G	6-4	301	25	1	Eastern Washington
76 Saffold, Rodger	G	6-5	325	30	9	Indiana
65 Sullivan, John	C	6-4	310	33	10	Notre Dame
77 Whitworth, Andrew	T	6-7	333	36	13	LSU
63 Williams, Darrell	T	6-5	305	25	3	South Florida

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
34 Brown, Malcolm	RB	5-11	227	25	3	Texas
33 Davis, Justin	RB	6-1	198	22	2	USC
30 Gurley II, Todd	RB	6-1	227	24	4	Georgia
39 Rogers, Sam	FB	5-10	235	23	2	Virginia Tech
41 Tillery, Lenard	RB	5-10	198	24	2	Southern

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
13 Brown, Fred	WR	6-1	196	24	1	Mississippi State
12 Cooks, Brandin	WR	5-10	189	24	5	Oregon State
10 Cooper, Pharoh	WR	5-11	207	23	3	South Carolina
81 Everett, Gerald	TE	6-3	245	24	2	South Alabama
84 Hemingway, Temarrick	TE	6-5	251	25	3	South Carolina State
89 Higbee, Tyler	TE	6-6	257	25	3	Western Kentucky
87 Krieger-Coble, Henry	TE	6-4	248	26	1	Iowa
18 Kupp, Cooper	WR	6-2	205	25	2	Eastern Washington
82 Mundt, Johnny	TE	6-4	232	23	2	Oregon
83 Reynolds, Josh	WR	6-3	192	23	2	Texas A&M
88 Thomas, Mike	WR	6-1	195	24	3	Southern Miss
17 Woods, Robert	WR	6-0	193	26	6	USC

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
90 Brockers, Michael	DT	6-5	302	27	7	LSU
67 Bryant, Omarius	DT	6-3	315	23	1	Western Kentucky
99 Donald, Aaron	DT	6-1	280	27	5	Pittsburgh
91 Easley, Dominique	DT	6-2	273	26	5	Florida
97 Fox, Morgan	DE	6-3	275	23	3	Colorado State-Pueblo
92 Smart, Tanzel	DT	6-1	290	23	2	Tulane
93 Suh, Ndamukong	DT	6-4	305	31	9	Nebraska
95 Westbrooks, Ethan	DL	6-4	283	27	5	West Texas A&M

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
26 Barron, Mark	LB	6-2	225	28	7	Alabama
50 Ebukam, Samson	LB	6-3	240	23	2	Eastern Washington
54 Hager, Bryce	LB	6-1	237	26	4	Baylor
58 Littleton, Cory	LB	6-3	225	24	3	Washington
96 Longacre, Matt	LB/DE	6-3	255	26	4	Northwest Missouri State
51 Price, Ejuan	LB	6-0	250	25	2	Pittsburgh
56 Sickels, Garrett	LB	6-4	252	23	1	Penn State
53 Thompson, Carlos	LB	6-5	250	26	2	Ole Miss
52 Wilson, Ramik	LB	6-2	237	26	4	Georgia

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
41 Christian, Marqui	DB	5-11	200	23	3	Midwestern State
24 Countess, Blake	DB	5-10	185	25	3	Auburn
36 Hatfield, Dominique	DB	5-10	170	23	2	Utah
32 Hill, Troy	CB	5-11	184	27	3	Oregon
27 Johnson, Isaiah	DB	6-1	207	26	3	Georgia Tech
43 Johnson III, John	S	6-1	204	22	2	Boston College
20 Joyner, Lamarcus	S	5-8	190	27	5	Florida State
31 Nixon, Taurean	CB	5-10	187	27	1	Tulane
22 Peters, Marcus	CB	6-0	197	25	4	Washington
47 Peterson, Kevin	CB	5-11	180	24	2	Oklahoma State
23 Robey-Coleman, Nickell	DB	5-8	178	26	6	USC
37 Shields, Sam	CB	5-11	184	30	8	Miami (Fla.)
21 Talib, Aqib	DB	6-1	205	32	11	Kansas

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
5 Ficken, Sam	K	6-1	191	25	1	Penn State
6 Hekker, Johnny	P	6-5	241	28	7	Oregon State
44 McQuaide, Jake	LS	6-2	225	30	8	Ohio State
4 Zuerlein, Greg	K	6-0	191	30	7	Missouri Western State

↘ THE RAMS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
3	89	Joseph Noteboom	T	6-5	309	23	TCU
4	111	Brian Allen	C	6-1	298	22	Michigan State
4	135	John Franklin-Myers	DE	6-4	283	22	Stephen F. Austin
5	147	Micah Kiser	LB	6-0	238	23	Virginia
5	160	Obgonnia Okoronkwo	DE	6-2	253	22	Oklahoma
6	176	John Kelly	RB	5-10	216	21	Tennessee
6	192	Jamil Demby	G	6-5	319	22	Maine
6	195	Sebastian Joseph	DT	6-4	305	23	Rutgers
6	205	Trevon Young	DE	6-4	258	23	Louisville
7	231	Travin Howard	LB	6-1	213	22	TCU
7	244	Justin Lawler	DE	6-4	262	23	SMU

SAN FRANCISCO
49ERS

Jimmy Garoppolo, QB

GAROPPOLO: JEFF HAYNES / AP

↘2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
@ Minnesota	Detroit	@ Kansas City	@ L.A. Chargers	Arizona	@ Green Bay	L.A. Rams	@ Arizona
Sept. 9 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 16 / 4:05 PM	Sept. 23 / 1:00 PM	Sept. 30 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 7 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 15 / 8:15 PM	Oct. 21 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 28 / 4:25 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 6-10 **HOME:** 3-5
CONFERENCE: 3-9 **DIVISION:** 1-5

HEAD COACH **KYLE SHANAHAN** (SECOND YEAR, 6-10)
CAREER RECORD: 6-10

▶ **ONLINE:** www.49ers.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @49ers
▶ **TICKETS:** 415-GO-49ERS
▶ **STADIUM:** Levi's Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 68,500
▶ **TURF:** Grass

Holy, Garoppolo! ... the 'Niners have themselves a legitimate contender

BY MATT BARROWS
Sacramento Bee

After winning their last five games in 2017, the buoyant and chipper 49ers all said they wished they could keep playing. The trick this year will be getting that late-season magic to carry over into the 2018 campaign. They seem to have all the right pieces for doing so, including a newly minted franchise quarterback in Jimmy Garoppolo, new weapons in running back Jerick McKinnon and second-round pick Dante Pettis, plus a legitimate candidate for Defensive Player of the Year in DeForest Buckner.

Coach Kyle Shanahan's biggest task may be making sure his players don't take their press clippings too seriously. Last year's Garoppolo-led, late-season surge has made the 49ers a trendy pick to win the NFC West. How does Shanahan get his players focused and firmly planted in reality? He need only remind them that they began last season 0-9, the worst start in franchise history.

OFFENSE

Shanahan's attack is predicated on being able to run or pass on a given snap no matter the personnel group that's on the field. That's why McKinnon's

addition should be an upgrade. He was a jack-of-all-trades type at Georgia Southern, sometimes lining up at wide receiver. Look for him to be far more effective as a pass catcher than last year's top back, Carlos Hyde, who led the team in dropped passes. Shanahan will call the plays from the sideline for the second straight season.

QUARTERBACKS: The team's biggest offseason move was signing Garoppolo to a five-year, $137 million contract. That's a lot of faith—and dough—in someone who's played exactly six and a half regular-season games for your team. Garoppolo, however, passed every test the 49ers gave him late last season. He was a quick study with a fast release who made all the receivers around him, especially Marquise Goodwin, much better. He was also immediately embraced in the locker room and had an easy chemistry with teammates—no small feat for someone who arrived Oct. 31. The nearly four seasons Garoppolo spent watching Tom Brady run the New England Patriots likely sharpened his leadership skills.

The 49ers like C.J. Beathard in the backup spot. He doesn't have Garoppolo's arm talent, but Beathard showed true toughness in 2017 when the 49ers were at their lowest point. The goal with Beathard is to duplicate what the Patriots did with Garoppolo: develop him into a legitimate

2
PREDICTED FINISH NFC WEST

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE
QB	Jimmy Garoppolo
	C.J. Beathard
FB	Kyle Juszczyk
RB	Jerick McKinnon
	Matt Breida
LT	Joe Staley
	Garry Gilliam
LG	Laken Tomlinson
	Zane Beadles
C	Weston Richburg
	Erik Magnuson
RG	Jonathan Cooper
	Joshua Garnett
RT	Mike McGlinchey
	Garry Gilliam
TE	George Kittle
	Garrett Celek
WR	Pierre Garcon
	Aldrick Robinson
WR	Marquise Goodwin
	Trent Taylor

DEFENSE
DE	Arik Armstead
	Ronald Blair
DT	DeForest Buckner
	Sheldon Day
NT	Earl Mitchell
	D.J. Jones
DE	Solomon Thomas
	Jeremiah Attaochu
OLB	Eli Harold
	Dekoda Watson
ILB	Korey Toomer
	Fred Warner
OLB	Malcolm Smith
	Elijah Lee
CB	Richard Sherman
	Jimmie Ward
CB	Ahkello Witherspoon
	Greg Mabin
SS	Jaquiski Tartt
	Marcell Harris
FS	Adrian Colbert
	Jimmie Ward

SPECIALISTS
LS	Kyle Nelson
P	Bradley Pinion
K	Robbie Gould
KR	Raheem Mostert
PR	Dante Pettis

BYE: WEEK 11 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 9	**Week 10**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
Oakland	N.Y. Giants	@ Tampa Bay	@ Seattle	Denver	Seattle	Chicago	@ L.A. Rams
Nov. 1 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 12 / 8:15 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 9 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 16 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 23 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 30 / 4:25 PM

SAN FRANCISCO **49ERS**

Marquise Goodwin, WR

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
33-47

12-4	8-8	5-11	2-14	6-10
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN LOSS TIE

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion
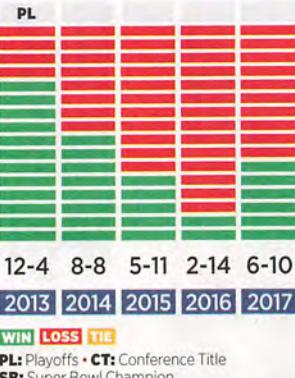
starter, then trade him before his contract expires.

RUNNING BACKS: Nobody knew quite what to make of McKinnon–who lined up at quarterback, running back, wideout and even cornerback–when he was coming out of Georgia Southern. That versatility, however, is exactly what appealed to Shanahan. He believes McKinnon has the toughness and grit to be San Francisco's lead runner but also the skills to be a big weapon in the passing game. Matt Breida, a former teammate of McKinnon's at Georgia Southern, was an excellent pickup after the draft last year. He enters the season as the No. 2 runner but must hold off Joe Williams, a fourth-round pick in 2017, and Jeremy McNichols, who spent most of last season on the practice squad.

RECEIVERS: Something worth mentioning about Garoppolo's mastery of the offense and late-season success: He did it without the 49ers' top receiver, Pierre Garcon. The veteran suffered a freak injury–a fracture to a small bone at the base of his neck–one day before the 49ers traded for Garoppolo. Garcon spent the rest of the season on injured reserve but was back at full strength this spring and promises to be a key weapon and safety valve for the quarterback. He is also a nice complement to the explosive Goodwin, who took off when Garoppolo took over as starter, catching 29 of his 56 passes in the final five-game stretch. Pettis, the team's second-round pick, can play all three receiver spots–X, Z and slot–and provides great depth. At tight end, Garrett Celek was a steady

contributor throughout last season, and the team expects to see a big leap from George Kittle, who dealt with an array of injuries during his rookie season but came on at the end.

OFFENSIVE LINE: The 49ers used their first-round pick on Notre Dame's Mike McGlinchey, then immediately traded right tackle Trent Brown to New England. McGlinchey will compete against Garry Gilliam for a starting role, but it will be a major disappointment if the rookie, a two-year team captain with the Fighting Irish, is not their right tackle when the 49ers travel to Minnesota in the season opener. The 49ers see him as the eventual heir at left tackle. Joe Staley continues to play at a high level at that spot, but he turns 34 in August. The 49ers hooked a pricey free agent, center Weston

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the 49ers

"(Mike) McGlinchey is a good player, solid player. We had him as our top tackle (in the draft). But he's still a reach. It's always going to be a reach. You have to for that position. There just aren't many out there, you know? And the ones that are there, they're there for a reason. ... He's OK (athletically). He'll be better than the guy they had out there before (Trent Brown). But he's no **(Joe) Staley**. Watch him against Miami. He had trouble with speed."

GOODWIN: RICK SCUTERI / AP; STALEY: MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ / AP
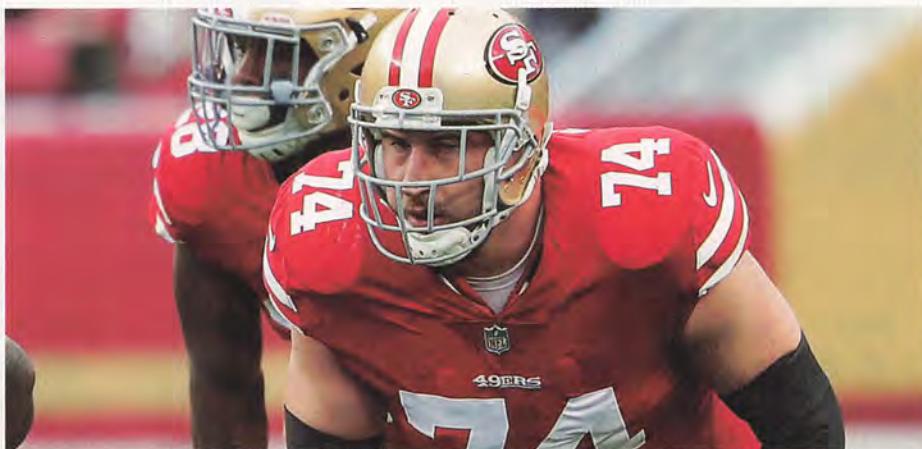
↘ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	3-23	Carolina Panthers
09/17	L	9-12	Seattle Seahawks
09/21	L	39-41	Los Angeles Rams
10/01	L	15-18	Arizona Cardinals
10/08	L	23-26	Indianapolis Colts
10/15	L	24-26	Washington Redskins
10/22	L	10-40	Dallas Cowboys
10/29	L	10-33	Philadelphia Eagles
11/05	L	10-20	Arizona Cardinals
11/12	W	31-21	New York Giants
11/26	L	13-24	Seattle Seahawks
12/03	W	15-14	Chicago Bears
12/10	W	26-16	Houston Texans
12/17	W	25-23	Tennessee Titans
12/24	W	44-33	Jacksonville Jaguars
12/31	W	34-13	Los Angeles Rams
		2017 RECORD: 6-10	

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Hyde	240	938	3.9	61	8
Breida	105	465	4.4	33t	2
Beathard	26	136	5.2	16	3
Garoppolo	15	11	0.7	8	1
Juszczyk	7	31	4.4	12	0
Mostert	6	30	5.0	16	0
Hoyer	5	7	1.4	9t	1
Goodwin	4	44	11.0	18	0
SAN FRANCISCO	408	1,662	4.1	61	15
OPPONENTS	491	1,861	3.8	45	13

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Hyde	59	350	5.9	18	0
Goodwin	56	962	17.2	83t	2
Kittle	43	515	12.0	44	2
Taylor	43	430	10.0	33	2
Garcon	40	500	12.5	59	0
Juszczyk	33	315	9.5	44	1
Celek	21	336	16.0	61	4
Breida	21	180	8.6	32	1
Robinson	19	260	13.7	45t	2
Bourne	16	257	16.1	54	0
Murphy	8	121	15.1	40	1
Hikutini	2	15	7.5	10	0
Garoppolo	1	-6	-6.0	-6	0
SAN FRANCISCO	362	4,235	11.7	83t	15
OPPONENTS	344	3,943	11.5	72t	27

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Beathard	224	123	1,430	4	6
Hoyer	205	119	1,245	4	4
Garoppolo	178	120	1,560	7	5
SAN FRANCISCO	607	362	3,925	15	15
OPPONENTS	544	344	3,764	27	10

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Bolden	19	396	20.8	34	0
Breida	5	83	16.6	28	0
Mostert	5	83	16.6	21	0
Taylor	1	8	8.0	8	0
Blair	1	0	0.0	0	0
SAN FRANCISCO	31	570	18.4	34	0
OPPONENTS	15	302	20.1	28	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Taylor	30	281	9.4	39	0
Bolden	4	23	5.8	16	0
SAN FRANCISCO	34	304	8.9	39	0
OPPONENTS	33	138	4.2	61t	1

SACKS	SAN FRANCISCO 30.0, OPPONENTS 43.0

Dumervil 6.5, Buckner 3.0, Thomas 3.0, Blair 2.0, Douzable 2.0, Harold 2.0, Marsh 2.0, Armstead 1.5, Carradine 1.5, Armstrong 1.0, Day 1.0, Lynch 1.0, Mitchell 1.0, Williams 1.0, Cooper 0.5, Coyle 0.5, Tartt 0.5

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	349.2	12
Rushing	103.9	21
Passing	245.3	9
Scoring	20.7	20
Punt returns	8.9	10
Kick returns	18.4	31
Red zone TD%	47.1	27
Total defense	351.6	24
Against rush	116.3	22
Against pass	235.2	22
Points allowed	23.9	25
Interceptions	10	24t
Sacks	30.0	26t
Turnover diff.	-3	20t

Richburg, to anchor their line. Who plays on either side of him at guard is far more cloudy. The top contenders appear to be Laken Tomlinson and newcomer Jonathan Cooper. Former first-round pick Joshua Garnett, who dropped 25 pounds so that he could better operate Shanahan's zone-run offense, is the wild card.

DEFENSE

The 49ers' defense is run by former Seattle assistant coach Robert Saleh and includes several former Seahawks players. In that way, they aspire to have an aggressive, always-attacking defensive front that is able to rush five at a time because the cornerbacks snuff out easy passes to the sideline. San Francisco seems a step away from that aspiration; improving the pass rush from the edges is an area that still needs improvement.

DEFENSIVE LINE: This unit made a huge improvement against the run last season from 2016 when it allowed more yards than any in team history. The 49ers' sack total, however, remained at the bottom of the league rankings and sharpening the edges of the defense should have been an offseason priority. Their biggest move there, however, was signing ex-Charger Jeremiah Attaochu in free agency. He's familiar with the role but was injured a lot and was a disappointment with Los Angeles. Attaochu, Cassius

INSIDE THE HEADSET
San Francisco head coach Kyle Shanahan
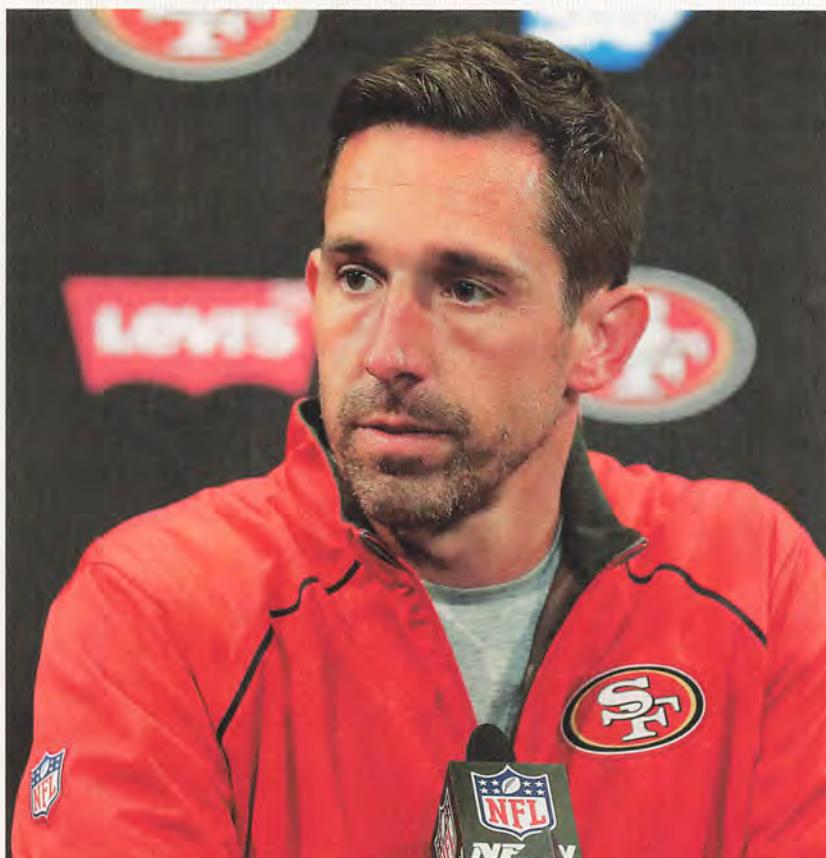
Shanahan is an aggressive coach who calls his plays based on the matchups he sees on the field. That's why versatile players like Jerick McKinnon and fullback Kyle Juszczyk are so important to him. He sees them not as a tailback and a fullback but as offensive weapons who can do several things equally well. McKinnon, for example, often lined up as a wide receiver in college. If Shanahan sees potential matchups in which McKinnon is covered by a 250-pound linebacker, he will strike. It's also why this offseason is so critical for quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo. It's not just a matter of knowing the plays, but fully understanding the philosophy behind them.

SAN FRANCISCO **49ERS**

Marsh and Eli Harold will compete to be the team's designated pass rusher on throwing downs. The idea is to force opposing quarterbacks to step forward in the pocket so that the interior pass rushers, former first-round picks DeForest Buckner and Solomon Thomas, can finish them off.

LINEBACKERS: The 49ers realize they can't count on Reuben Foster, who faces domestic violence and other felony charges, at the start of the season and perhaps much longer than that. Veteran Malcolm Smith is fully healthy after tearing a pectoral muscle in training camp last year. He's best at weakside linebacker where he can take full advantage of his safety-like speed. Without Foster, Brock Coyle, newcomer Korey Toomer and third-round draft pick Fred Warner are the best bets to play middle linebacker. Coyle, who like Smith is a former Seahawk, started 10 games there last year and received solid marks. The 49ers would like someone faster who can make more momentum-turning plays.

San Francisco's coaches and scouts were impressed by how well Warner played in space at BYU and he's reminiscent of some other linebackers–Seattle's Bobby Wagner, for example–who have played that specific position.

SECONDARY: The team loves the veteran presence Richard Sherman brings to an otherwise young position group. The cerebral Sherman is a particularly good mentor for last year's third-round pick, cornerback Ahkello Witherspoon, who seemed to get better and grow more confident with every start. Like Sherman, Witherspoon is extremely bright and eager to master the mental part of the position–film study, offensive tendencies, baiting quarterbacks–as much as the physical side. One of the 49ers' goals will be developing another young cornerback in addition to Witherspoon. They used a third-round pick on Tarvarius Moore, a safety in college they think can be converted to cornerback. Jaquiski Tartt enters the season as the starter at strong safety. The team has two good options

IMPACT NEWCOMER
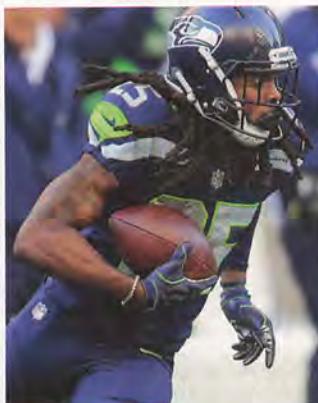
The 2017 San Francisco 49ers adopted the Seattle Seahawks' defense. In 2018, they signed Seattle's most famous defensive player. **Richard Sherman** not only is the 49ers' best cornerback since Deion Sanders, he gives them an element of swagger and ferocity that personified the Seahawks' defense in recent seasons. The team's Week 13 game at Seattle—Sherman's homecoming—is one to circle on the calendar.

at free safety in Jimmie Ward, who is entering the final year of his contract, and Adrian Colbert, who proved to be a seventh-round steal last year.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The 49ers got a big boost when they drafted Pettis, who holds the NCAA record with nine career punt returns for touchdowns. He likely will take over punt-return duties from Trent Taylor. Fifth-round pick D.J. Reed was also an acclaimed return man in college with a punt return and a kickoff return for a touchdown last year for Kansas State. In the kicking game, Robbie Gould hasn't missed a field goal since last October. He'll turn 36 this season, but the fact that punter Bradley Pinion handles kickoffs likely saves some wear and tear to Gould's leg.

BOTTOM LINE

When Shanahan and general manager John Lynch arrived last year, they felt they were in for a long, methodical rebuild of the franchise. There are still some pieces to add, but Garoppolo's arrival seemed to accelerate the timeline and certainly heightened expectations. With Garoppolo under center, the receiving group seemed more complete, the offensive line didn't appear to have as many holes and even the defense played with a bit more confidence and fire. If he stays healthy and if the defense makes the same size strides next season, there's no reason why the 49ers can't at least be competing for a playoff spot when December rolls around.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B
2018 STOCKWATCH: OVERPERFORM

THE LAST TIME ...

San Francisco quarterback John Brodie, left, is all smiles following a 38-7 win over the Oakland Raiders on Dec. 20, 1970.

... the 49ers had a quarterback lead the NFL in passing yards was 1970. Two-time Pro Bowler John Brodie passed for 2,941 yards and 24 touchdowns that season while earning MVP honors and leading San Francisco to a 10-3-1 record and NFC West title. It was the franchise's first trip to the playoffs since 1957.

⬊ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **DE** Jeremiah Attaochu
  (free agent, L.A. Chargers)
- **RB** Jerick McKinnon
  (free agent, Minnesota)
- **C** Weston Richburg
  (free agent, N.Y. Giants)
- **CB** Richard Sherman
  (free agent, Seattle)
- **OG** Jonathan Cooper
  (free agent, Dallas)
- **CB** Korey Toomer
  (free agent, L.A. Chargers)

NFL DRAFT

Jerick McKinnon

THE DRAFT REPORT

The 49ers landed a good right tackle in **Mike McGlinchey**. But he replaces a good right tackle in Trent Brown. That seemed symbolic of a draft that brought in some interesting players but didn't seem to make much of an impact. Aside from McGlinchey, the draft pick with the best chance to start this season is third-rounder Fred Warner, who could line up next to Malcolm Smith in Week One. But he only would be in the lineup if starter Reuben Foster is still not back with the team. San Francisco's draft seemed to be one in which it was treading water.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
C+

⬊ THE 49ERS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	9	Mike McGlinchey	T	6-8	309	24	Notre Dame
2	44	Dante Pettis	WR	6-1	195	22	Washington
3	70	Fred Warner	LB	6-3	226	22	BYU
3	95	Tarvarius Moore	DB	6-2	193	22	Southern Miss
4	128	Kentavius Street	DL	6-2	280	22	N.C. State
5	142	D.J. Reed	DB	5-9	188	21	Kansas State
6	184	Marcell Harris	DB	6-0	208	23	Florida
7	223	Jullian Taylor	DT	6-5	280	23	Temple
7	240	Richie James	WR	5-9	176	23	Middle Tennessee

⬊ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Kyle Shanahan, **Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator;** Robert Saleh, **Defensive Coordinator;** Richard Hightower, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
3 Beathard, C.J.	QB	6-2	215	24	2	Iowa
10 Garoppolo, Jimmy	QB	6-2	226	26	5	Eastern Illinois
4 Mullens, Nick	QB	6-1	187	23	1	Southern Miss

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
68 Beadles, Zane	G	6-4	305	31	9	Utah
64 Cooper, Jonathan	G	6-2	308	28	6	North Carolina
65 Garnett, Joshua	G	6-5	321	24	3	Stanford
76 Gilliam, Garry	OL	6-5	315	27	5	Penn State
61 Lauderdale, Andrew	OL	6-6	291	24	1	New Hampshire
62 Magnuson, Erik	OL	6-4	305	24	2	Michigan
71 Murphy, Pace	T	6-6	308	24	2	Northwestern State
58 Richburg, Weston	C	6-4	300	27	5	Colorado State
74 Staley, Joe	T	6-5	315	34	12	Central Michigan
75 Tomlinson, Laken	OL	6-3	312	26	4	Duke
78 Williams Jr., Darrell	OL	6-5	310	25	2	Western Kentucky

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
22 Breida, Matt	RB	5-10	190	23	2	Georgia Southern
46 Johnson, Malcolm	FB	6-1	231	26	3	Mississippi State
44 Juszczyk, Kyle	FB	6-1	240	27	6	Harvard
28 McKinnon, Jerick	RB	5-9	205	26	5	Georgia Southern
33 McNichols, Jeremy	RB	5-9	214	22	1	Boise State
31 Mostert, Raheem	RB	5-10	197	26	4	Purdue
32 Williams, Joe	RB	5-11	205	25	2	Utah

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
17 Bolden Jr., Victor	WR	5-8	178	23	2	Oregon State
84 Bourne, Kendrick	WR	6-1	203	23	2	Eastern Washington
13 Burbridge, Aaron	WR	6-1	208	24	3	Michigan State
14 Carter, DeAndre	WR	5-8	190	25	1	Sacramento State
88 Celek, Garrett	TE	6-5	252	30	7	Michigan State
15 Garcon, Pierre	WR	6-0	211	32	11	Mount Union
11 Goodwin, Marquise	WR	5-9	179	27	6	Texas
83 Hikutini, Cole	TE	6-4	247	24	2	Louisville
85 Kittle, George	TE	6-4	250	24	2	Iowa
1 McCaffrey, Max	WR	6-2	200	24	2	Duke
19 Robinson, Aldrick	WR	5-10	187	29	6	SMU
81 Taylor, Trent	WR	5-8	178	24	2	Louisiana Tech
89 Wick, Cole	TE	6-6	257	24	2	Incarnate Word

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
91 Armstead, Arik	DL	6-7	292	24	4	Oregon
92 Attaochu, Jeremiah	DL	6-3	252	25	5	Georgia Tech
98 Blair III, Ronald	DL	6-4	270	25	3	Appalachian State
99 Buckner, DeForest	DL	6-7	300	24	3	Oregon
96 Day, Sheldon	DL	6-1	294	24	3	Notre Dame
93 Jones, D.J.	DL	6-0	321	23	2	Ole Miss
54 Marsh, Cassius	DL	6-4	245	26	5	UCLA
90 Mitchell, Earl	DT	6-3	310	30	9	Arizona
94 Thomas, Solomon	DL	6-2	256	22	2	Stanford

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
50 Coyle, Brock	LB	6-1	245	27	5	Montana
56 Foster, Reuben	LB	6-1	228	24	2	Alabama
47 Gilbert, Jimmie	LB	6-5	230	23	2	Colorado
57 Harold, Eli	LB	6-3	265	24	4	Virginia
47 Lee, Elijah	LB	6-2	229	22	2	Kansas State
49 Lokombo, Boseko	LB	6-2	231	27	1	Oregon
48 Newsom, Donavin	LB	6-2	240	24	2	Missouri
53 Nzeocha, Mark	LB	6-3	240	28	4	Wyoming
51 Smith, Malcolm	LB	6-0	225	29	8	USC
55 Taumoepenu, Pita	LB	6-1	245	24	2	Utah
59 Toomer, Korey	LB	6-2	235	29	5	Idaho
97 Watson, Dekoda	LB	6-2	245	30	9	Florida State

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
38 Colbert, Adrian	DB	6-2	205	24	2	Miami (Fla.)
43 James, Chancellor	S	6-2	208	23	2	Boise State
36 Jones, Don	DB	5-11	195	28	6	Arkansas State
26 Mabin, Greg	CB	6-1	200	24	2	Iowa
27 McCoil, Dexter	DB	6-4	220	27	3	Tulsa
45 Powell, Tyvis	DB	6-2	211	24	2	Ohio State
30 Reed, Trovon	DB	6-0	191	27	2	Auburn
25 Sherman, Richard	CB	6-3	195	30	8	Stanford
41 Stribling, Channing	CB	6-1	188	23	1	Michigan
29 Tartt, Jaquiski	S	6-1	221	26	4	Samford
20 Ward, Jimmie	DB	5-11	193	27	5	Northern Illinois
24 Williams, K'Waun	CB	5-9	183	27	4	Pittsburgh
23 Witherspoon, Ahkello	CB	6-2	195	23	2	Colorado

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9 Gould, Robbie	K	6-0	190	35	14	Penn State
2 Locke, Jeff	P	6-0	207	28	5	UCLA
86 Nelson, Kyle	LS	6-2	240	31	7	New Mexico State
5 Pinion, Bradley	P	6-5	229	24	4	Clemson

SEATTLE
SEAHAWKS

Russell Wilson, QB
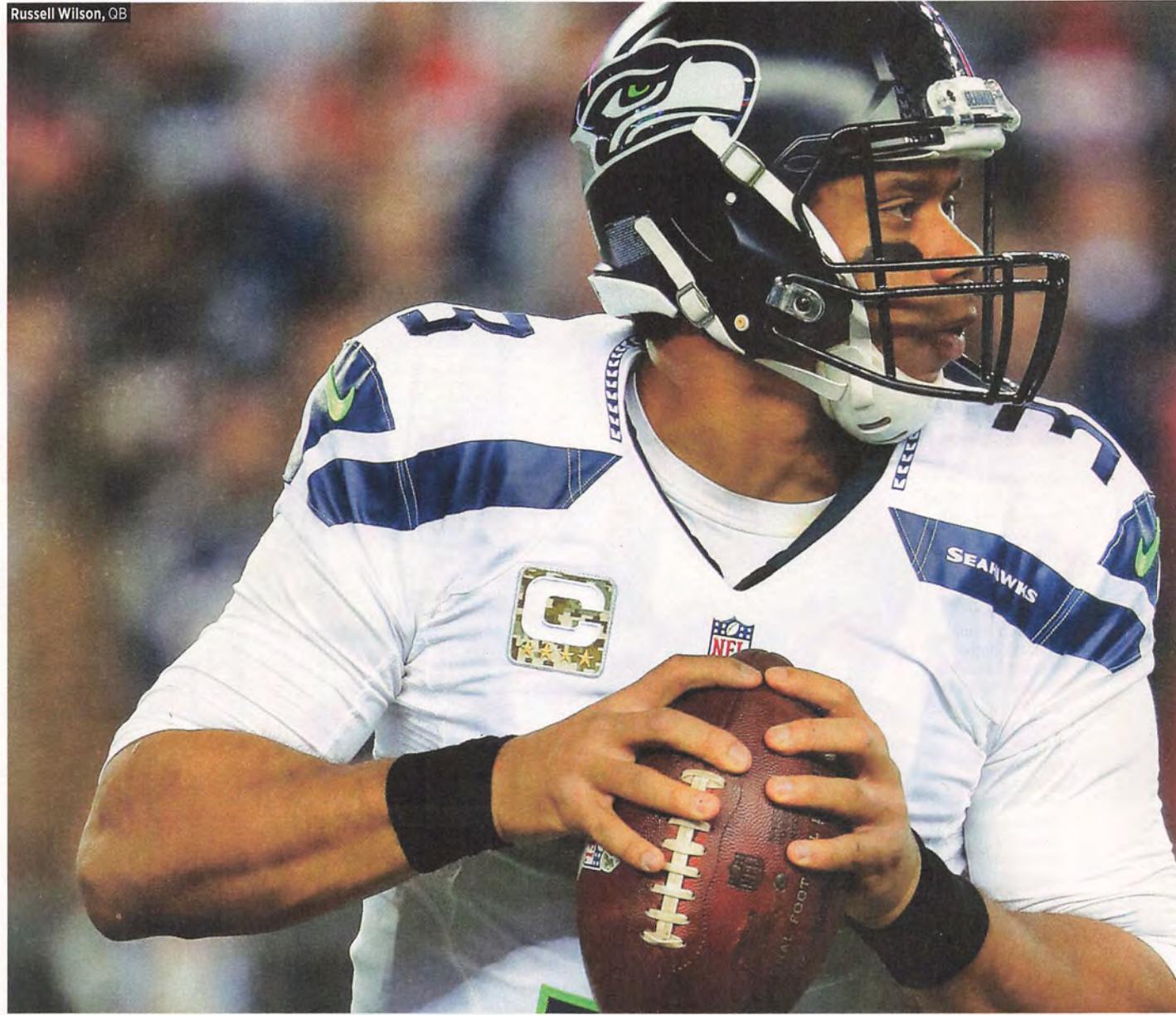
WILSON: WINSLOW TOWNSON / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 8	Week 9
@ Denver	@ Chicago	Dallas	@ Arizona	L.A. Rams	@ Oakland*	@ Detroit	L.A. Chargers
Sept. 9 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 17 / 8:15 PM	Sept. 23 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 30 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 7 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 28 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 4 / 4:05 PM

2017 RECORD **OVERALL:** 9-7 **HOME:** 4-4
CONFERENCE: 7-5 **DIVISION:** 4-2

HEAD COACH **PETE CARROLL** (NINTH YEAR, 79-48-1)
CAREER RECORD: 112-79-1

- **ONLINE:** www.seahawks.com
- **TWITTER:** @Seahawks
- **TICKETS:** 888-635-4295
- **STADIUM:** CenturyLink Field
- **CAPACITY:** 69,000
- **TURF:** FieldTurf

Seahawks like to fly but finding a ground game is essential for these birds

BY DANNY O'NEIL
Street & Smith's correspondent

The Seahawks missed the playoffs last season for the first time in quarterback Russell Wilson's tenure, and the franchise's fortunes look like they're more likely to get worse than better.

The defense that was the bedrock for Seattle's only championship is largely gone, and Wilson led the team in rushing, which is a compliment to his ability and a criticism about the effectiveness of an offense that got one rushing touchdown combined from its running backs.

The Seahawks traded their No. 2 pass rusher in Michael Bennett, released All-Pro cornerback Richard Sherman and watched as Jimmy Graham—the team leader with 10 touchdowns—signed with Green Bay as a free agent.

The gap between the Seahawks and the Rams was evident last December, and it only got wider in the offseason. Reclaiming the division will take more than just an otherworldly effort from Wilson. The defense will have to find a new generation of stars overnight. That's possible, but it's not likely.

OFFENSE

The Seahawks were unspeakably awful at running the ball last season. They had a net rushing of zero yards on all their rushing attempts inside the opponents' 10-yard line. Not only did Wilson lead the team in rushing, but he scored three of the team's four rushing touchdowns last season. So Seattle has a new offensive coordinator in Brian Schottenheimer, a new offensive line coach in Mike Solari and used a first-round pick on running back Rashaad Penny to jump-start the attack.

QUARTERBACKS: When last December began, Wilson was a leading MVP candidate. When it ended, he wasn't part of the postseason for the first time in his six NFL seasons.

Wilson doesn't need to do more this season. He threw a league-high 34 touchdown passes, led the team in rushing yards and had a hand in all but one of the team's offensive touchdowns. Wilson needs to get more efficient, though, to execute more plays on schedule. That's a big part of why Schottenheimer was hired: to be a taskmaster that gets Wilson to execute the play as scripted rather than relying on his ingenuity and athleticism.

Austin Davis returns as Seattle's backup, and he's a future coach whose primary value isn't as a substitute for Wilson so much as his study partner during the week and an asset in games. Rookie Alex McGough is a project the

PREDICTED FINISH NFC WEST

3

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Russell Wilson
	Austin Davis
FB	Tre Madden
	Jalston Fowler
RB	Rashaad Penny
	C.J. Prosise
LT	Duane Brown
	Isaiah Battle
LG	Ethan Pocic
	Rees Odhiambo
C	Justin Britt
	Joey Hunt
RG	D.J. Fluker
	Jordan Roos
RT	Germain Ifedi
	George Fant
TE	Nick Vannett
	Ed Dickson
WR	Doug Baldwin
	Amara Darboh
WR	Tyler Lockett
	Jaron Brown

DEFENSE

DE	Frank Clark
	Barkevious Mingo
DT	Jarran Reed
	Rasheem Green
DT	Nazair Jones
	Tom Johnson
DE	Dion Jordan
	Marcus Smith II
LB	K.J. Wright
	Shaquem Griffin
LB	Bobby Wagner
	D.J. Alexander
LB	Paul Dawson
	Shaquem Griffin
CB	Shaquill Griffin
	Neiko Thorpe
CB	Byron Maxwell
	Justin Coleman
SS	Bradley McDougald
	Delano Hill
FS	Earl Thomas
	Tedric Thompson

SPECIALISTS

LS	Tyler Ott
P	Michael Dickson
K	Sebastian Janikowski
KR	Rashaad Penny
PR	Tyler Lockett

BYE: WEEK 7 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern. *London

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
@ L.A. Rams	Green Bay	@ Carolina	San Francisco	Minnesota	@ San Francisco	Kansas City	Arizona
Nov. 11 / 4:25 PM	Nov. 15 / 8:20 PM	Nov. 25 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 2 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 10 / 8:15 PM	Dec. 16 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 23 / 8:20 PM	Dec. 30 / 4:25 PM

SEATTLE **SEAHAWKS**

Doug Baldwin, WR

↘ 5-YEAR WIN TREND
54-25-1

SB	CT	PL		

13-3	12-4	10-6	10-5-1	9-7
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

team drafted in the seventh round.

RUNNING BACKS: Last year the Seahawks spent $4 million on Eddie Lacy in an effort to boost their ground game. They would have been better off setting that money on fire. It would've generated more heat.

So this year, Seattle went and drafted San Diego State's Penny with the 27th pick of the first round. He had the third-fastest 40 time at the Scouting Combine, but also packs some power at 220 pounds.

Chris Carson was a promising rookie for the first month last season before suffering a season-ending ankle injury, and C.J. Prosise is a talented back who has been hurt too often, missing 21 of a possible 32 regular-season games due to three different injuries.

The best sign for Seattle's ground game? The production at running back can't get much worse than last year when the team's backs combined for one rushing touchdown, which was scored by J.D. McKissic.

RECEIVERS: The Seahawks have traded for guys like Percy Harvin and Graham. They have drafted receivers like Paul Richardson and Tyler Lockett. And through it all, Doug Baldwin has been the team's most consistent player on offense. He has caught 50 or more passes in six of his seven seasons in the league and averaged 6.3 touchdown receptions since making the team as an undrafted free agent in 2011.

He will—again—carry a lot of the weight for this passing offense as Graham and Richardson signed elsewhere in free agency.

Lockett showed star potential at receiver in his first season, but he wasn't as explosively fast last year after suffering a gruesome compound fracture of his leg at the end of the 2016 campaign. The X-factor of the group is Amara Darboh, a third-round pick in 2017 whom the team thinks could be an absolute mainstay but who contributed next to nothing as a rookie. He must take a huge step forward for this group to even be average.

OFFENSIVE LINE: From 2010 through 2017, Seattle used more draft capital on the offensive line than any other team in the league, yet Wilson consistently has less time to pass than any quarterback. The fact that Seattle changed offensive line coaches, firing Tom Cable and hiring Solari, speaks to the belief that someone else will get more out of this group.

There's no questioning the pedigree of the unit. Seattle is prepared to start three former first-round picks and a pair of second-round choices. Left tackle Duane

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Seahawks

"They've relied for way too long on their quarterback's ability to improvise. Since **Russell Wilson** has gotten into the league, he has been flushed from the pocket quicker than any other quarterback. And let me be clear: He's still great when he does that. But he's also developed some bad habits. It's not that he doesn't always throw the ball on time so much as that he doesn't often throw the ball on time. The Seahawks are hoping that Brian Schottenheimer will be more demanding and take the pressure off of Wilson with a power run game. ... On defense, expect more emotion from this group, more passion. That's why Ken Norton Jr. was hired as coordinator. Pete (Carroll) has got all the Xs and Os. He wants someone who'll put a charge in these guys with the hope of letting the young guys fly around and get back to being an intimidating group."

↘ 2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	9-17	Green Bay Packers
09/17	W	12-9	San Francisco 49ers
09/24	L	27-33	Tennessee Titans
10/01	W	46-18	Indianapolis Colts
10/08	W	16-10	Los Angeles Rams
10/22	W	24-7	New York Giants
10/29	W	41-38	Houston Texans
11/05	L	14-17	Washington Redskins
11/09	W	22-16	Arizona Cardinals
11/20	L	31-34	Atlanta Falcons
11/26	W	24-13	San Francisco 49ers
12/03	W	24-10	Philadelphia Eagles
12/10	L	24-30	Jacksonville Jaguars
12/17	L	7-42	Los Angeles Rams
12/24	W	21-12	Dallas Cowboys
12/31	L	24-26	Arizona Cardinals

2017 RECORD: 9-7

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Wilson	95	586	6.2	31	3
Lacy	69	179	2.6	19	0
M. Davis	68	240	3.5	33	0
Rawls	58	157	2.7	23	0
Carson	49	208	4.2	30	0
McKissic	46	187	4.1	30t	1
Prosise	11	23	2.1	8	0
Lockett	10	58	5.8	22	0
Baldwin	2	-8	-4.0	-3	0
A. Davis	1	-1	-1.0	-1	0
SEATTLE	409	1,629	4.0	33	4
OPPONENTS	452	1,824	4.0	75t	14

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Baldwin	75	991	13.2	54	8
Graham	57	520	9.1	33	10
Lockett	45	555	12.3	74t	2
P. Richardson	44	703	16.0	61t	6
McKissic	34	266	7.8	27t	2
Willson	15	153	10.2	27t	4
M. Davis	15	131	8.7	23	0
Vannett	12	124	10.3	21	1
Rawls	9	94	10.4	22	0
Darboh	8	71	8.9	16	0
Carson	7	59	8.4	10t	1
Prosise	6	87	14.5	46	0
Lacy	6	47	7.8	14	0
McEvoy	5	113	22.6	53	0
Madden	2	65	32.5	66	0
SEATTLE	340	3,979	11.7	74t	34
OPPONENTS	325	3,616	11.1	75t	19

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Wilson	553	339	3,983	34	11
McEvoy	1	0	0	0	1
Ryan	1	1	-4	0	0
SEATTLE	555	340	3,657	34	12
OPPONENTS	554	325	3,347	19	14

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Lockett	37	949	25.6	99t	1
Willson	3	42	14.0	17	0
Pocic	1	13	13.0	13	0
Glowinski	1	0	0.0	0	0
Vannett	1	0	0.0	0	0
SEATTLE	43	1,004	23.3	99t	1
OPPONENTS	39	790	20.3	55	0

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Lockett	36	237	6.6	27	0
SEATTLE	36	237	6.6	27	0
OPPONENTS	45	452	10.0	72	0

SACKS   SEATTLE 39.0, OPPONENTS 43.0

Clark 9.0, Bennett 8.5, Jordan 4.0, Freeney 3.0, Smith 2.5, Jones 2.0, Coleman 1.5, Reed 1.5, Wagner 1.5, Avril 1.0, Garvin 1.0, Griffin 1.0, Jefferson 1.0, S. Richardson 1.0, Jackson 0.5

↘ 2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	330.4	15
Rushing	101.8	23
Passing	228.6	14
Scoring	22.9	11
Punt returns	6.6	24
Kick returns	23.3	5
Red zone TD%	55.6	12t
Total defense	323.2	11
Against rush	114.0	19
Against pass	209.2	6
Points allowed	20.8	13t
Interceptions	14	13t
Sacks	39.0	13t
Turnover diff.	+8	8

Brown has been a Pro Bowler and center Justin Britt is on the verge of becoming one.

The key for this line will be whether Seattle's new line coach will be making something out of Germain Ifedi, a former first-round pick who's entering his third season. He's absolutely massive with questionable footspeed. He moved from guard to tackle last season and promptly became the most penalized player in the league. The Seahawks hired Solari with the hope he'll help Ifedi thrive.

DEFENSE

When last year began, the Seattle defense included eight starters who dated back to the championship team of 2013. When this season starts, there will be only three—K.J. Wright, Bobby Wagner and Earl Thomas—as the Legion of Boom is now the Legion of Whom. Ken Norton Jr. returns to Seattle's staff, hired back as the defensive coordinator and tasked with restoring the confidence and aggressiveness with the Seahawks' next generation of defenders. Don't expect more blitzes, but you can expect an emphasis on physical, intimidating run defense.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Who's going to apply the pass pressure? It is the single biggest question about this defense after the trade of Bennett and expected retirement of Cliff Avril, who together

INSIDE THE HEADSET
Seattle head coach Pete Carroll
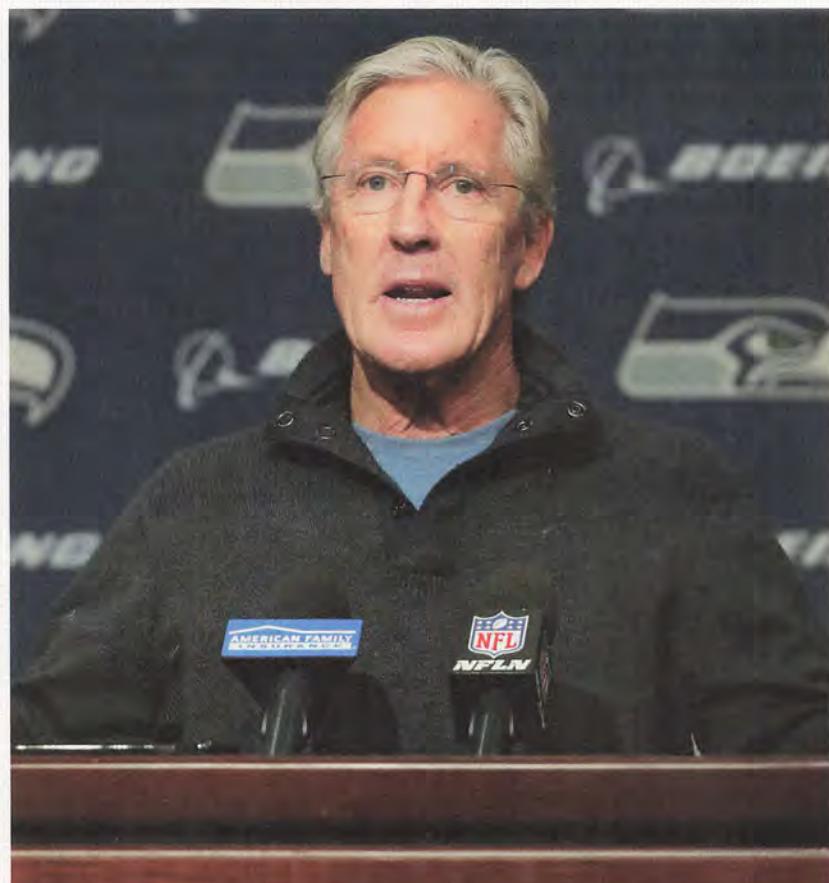
Carroll is known for his energy and unbridled enthusiasm, but he is also the oldest coach in the league and has some decidedly old-school attitudes about football. The only thing he wants to do more than run the ball is to avoid turnovers, and his defense annually ranks among the lowest in the league in terms of blitzes. Carroll believes the X-factor is the speed and energy of his team—well, that and a quarterback elusive enough to outrun a linebacker in a phone booth. Seattle's offseason moves show a determination to return to being one of the best special-teams groups in the league.

SEATTLE **SEAHAWKS**

accounted for more than one-third of Seattle's sacks over the past five seasons.

Frank Clark has 19.0 sacks over the past two seasons, and the Seahawks hope he'll emerge as a bona fide Pro Bowler this year, but after that Seattle is relying on a trio of former first-round busts in Dion Jordan, Barkevious Mingo and Marcus Smith II.

Tackles Jarran Reed and Nazair Jones don't have much in the way of reputation yet, but that's going to change, as they're rock-solid. Free-agent additions Tom Johnson and Shamar Stephen provide depth.

LINEBACKERS: Seattle has two of the very best linebackers in the league in Wagner and Wright. The only real depth at the position comes from Paul Dawson, special-teams ace D.J. Alexander and rookie Shaquem Griffin. But that's not a problem given the fact that the Seahawks expect to be in their nickel defense for about two-thirds of the snaps this season.

Wagner's speed is exceptional. He's also got a knack as a blitzer. And for all Seattle's success over the past five years, he is the only member of the team who's received a vote for league MVP (which came from Tony Dungy back in 2014).

Wright is one of the league's more underrated linebackers. He's tall and rangy and runs well enough to cover opposing tight ends.

SECONDARY: This used to be the signature of Seattle's defense. Now, it's the biggest uncertainty as Thomas is the only Pro Bowler left, and he's entering the final year of his contract after an offseason of trade speculation. The Seahawks hope that the 2017 draft class that included cornerback Shaquill Griffin and safeties Delano Hill and Tedric Thompson will be the next generation of difference-makers.

In the meantime, cornerbacks Byron Maxwell and Justin Coleman are now front-line players in a secondary that won't be the strength it once was, but won't be the team's biggest liability, either.

Barkevious Mingo will be playing for his fourth team in four seasons, but the Seahawks made the former first-round pick their top priority in free agency. Why? Pass rush. They believe he's built to be the edge rusher in their scheme, which is technically a 4-3 but uses 3-4 personnel. Seattle is hoping for big things from a guy who totaled two sacks over the previous three years.

SPECIAL TEAMS: The reason the Seahawks missed the playoffs last season had a lot to do with kicker Blair Walsh, whose failure to convert field goals cost Seattle at least two and maybe even three games. The Seahawks signed veteran Sebastian Janikowski after the Raiders opted not to re-sign him.

The Seahawks used a fifth-round pick on a punter, choosing Michael Dickson from Texas in hopes of tilting the field position. Seattle is hoping that Penny provides a boost on its kickoff returns and Lockett is again among the league's most dangerous punt returners.

BOTTOM LINE

As long as Wilson is healthy, the Seahawks will contend for a playoff berth. Their defense doesn't have either the pass rush or the playmakers to be a true Super Bowl contender. Right now, Seattle is closer to San Francisco in terms of talent than the Seahawks are to the division-favorite Rams. Expecting this team to win more than nine games is asking too much given the degree of turnover on defense and the fact that Seattle is searching for the right combination in its rushing game.

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Seahawks had a wideout with at least 1,200 receiving yards **was 2002 when Koren Robinson caught 78 passes for 1,240 yards and five touchdowns.** Robinson recorded five games with at least 100 yards in 2002, and it marked the only time in the N.C. State product's career that he would eclipse 1,000 yards.

2018 TEAM GRADE: B-
2018 STOCKWATCH: HOLD

⌐ NEW ARRIVALS

- **DT** Tom Johnson
  (free agent, Minnesota)
- **K** Sebastian Janikowski
  (free agent, Oakland)
- **OL** D.J. Fluker
  (free agent, N.Y. Giants)
- **WR** Jaron Brown
  (free agent, Arizona)
- **TE** Ed Dickson
  (free agent, Carolina)
- **DE/LB** Barkevious Mingo
  (free agent, Indianapolis)
- **DT** Shamar Stephen
  (free agent, Minnesota)

Jaron Brown

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Seahawks chose a running back in the first round for the first time in 18 years because they believe **Rashaad Penny** will restore a ground game that withered from No. 3 in the league as recently as 2015 to No. 23 last season. The Seahawks hope third-round pick Rasheem Green works into the rotation on the defensive line right away, but the only other rookie who figures to slide into an immediate role is punter Michael Dickson, who was drafted in the fifth round.

2018 DRAFT GRADE

C-

⌐ THE SEAHAWKS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	27	Rashaad Penny	RB	5-11	220	22	San Diego State
3	79	Rasheem Green	DE	6-4	275	21	USC
4	120	Will Dissly	TE	6-4	265	22	Washington
5	141	Shaquem Griffin	LB	6-0	227	23	UCF
5	146	Tre Flowers	CB	6-3	203	23	Oklahoma State
5	149	Michael Dickson	P	6-2	208	21	Texas
5	168	Jamarco Jones	T	6-4	300	22	Ohio State
6	186	Jacob Martin	DE	6-2	236	22	Temple
7	220	Alex McGough	QB	6-3	214	22	Florida International

⌐ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Pete Carroll, **Head Coach;** Brian Schottenheimer, **Offensive Coordinator;** Ken Norton Jr., **Defensive Coordinator;** Brian Schneider, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
6 Davis, Austin	QB	6-2	221	29	7	Southern Miss
7 Morris, Stephen	QB	6-2	219	26	1	Miami (Fla.)
3 Wilson, Russell	QB	5-11	215	29	7	Wisconsin

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
79 Battle, Isaiah	T	6-7	290	25	4	Clemson
66 Beavers, Willie	T	6-5	322	24	2	Western Michigan
68 Britt, Justin	C	6-6	315	27	5	Missouri
76 Brown, Duane	T	6-4	315	33	11	Virginia Tech
74 Fant, George	T	6-5	322	26	3	Western Kentucky
78 Fluker, D.J.	G/T	6-5	342	27	6	Alabama
53 Hunt, Joey	C	6-2	299	24	2	TCU
65 Ifedi, Germain	G/T	6-5	325	24	3	Texas A&M
70 Odhiambo, Rees	G/T	6-4	315	26	3	Boise State
77 Pocic, Ethan	C/G	6-6	309	23	2	LSU
64 Roos, Jordan	G	6-3	302	25	2	Purdue

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
32 Carson, Chris	RB	5-11	218	23	2	Oklahoma State
39 Davis, Mike	RB	5-9	217	25	4	South Carolina
43 Fowler, Jalston	FB	5-11	254	28	4	Alabama
38 Madden, Tre	FB	6-0	235	25	3	USC
21 McKissic, J.D.	RB	5-10	195	25	2	Arkansas State
22 Prosise, C.J.	RB	6-1	225	24	3	Notre Dame

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
89 Baldwin, Doug	WR	5-10	192	29	8	Stanford
18 Brown, Jaron	WR	6-3	204	28	6	Clemson
82 Darboh, Amara	WR	6-2	219	24	2	Michigan
84 Dickson, Ed	TE	6-4	250	31	9	Oregon
13 Grayson Jr., Cyril	WR	5-9	183	24	1	LSU
14 Johnson, Marcus	WR	6-1	204	24	2	Texas
16 Lockett, Tyler	WR	5-10	182	25	4	Kansas State
19 McEvoy, Tanner	WR	6-6	230	25	3	Wisconsin
83 Moore, David	WR	6-0	219	23	2	East Central (Okla.)
46 Swoopes, Tyrone	TE	6-4	254	23	1	Texas
81 Vannett, Nick	TE	6-6	261	25	3	Ohio State

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
55 Clark, Frank	DE	6-3	260	25	4	Michigan
93 Jackson, Branden	DE	6-4	270	25	2	Texas Tech
99 Jefferson, Quinton	DT	6-4	291	25	3	Maryland
91 Johnson, Tom	DT	6-3	288	34	8	Southern Miss
92 Jones, Nazair	DT	6-5	304	23	2	North Carolina
95 Jordan, Dion	DE	6-6	275	28	4	Oregon
94 McDowell, Malik	DT	6-6	299	22	1	Michigan State
51 Mingo, Barkevious	DE/LB	6-5	241	27	6	LSU
67 Nwachukwu, Noble	DE	6-2	275	23	1	West Virginia
90 Reed, Jarran	DT	6-3	306	25	3	Alabama
97 Smith II, Marcus	DE	6-3	258	26	5	Louisville
98 Stephen, Shamar	DT	6-5	309	27	5	Connecticut

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
58 Alexander, D.J.	LB	6-2	233	26	4	Oregon State
47 Dawson, Paul	LB	6-0	240	25	2	TCU
54 Wagner, Bobby	LB	6-0	245	28	7	Utah State
50 Wright, K.J.	LB	6-4	246	29	8	Mississippi State

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
35 Alexander, Maurice	SS	6-2	220	27	4	Utah State
1 Carter, Alex	FS	6-0	201	23	1	Stanford
31 Chancellor, Kam	SS	6-3	225	30	9	Virginia Tech
28 Coleman, Justin	CB	5-11	190	25	4	Tennessee
21 Elliott, DeAndre	CB	6-1	189	25	3	Colorado State
26 Griffin, Shaquill	CB	6-0	198	23	2	UCF
42 Hill, Delano	SS	6-1	216	22	2	Michigan
39 Johnson, Dontae	CB	6-2	200	26	5	N.C. State
36 King, Akeem	CB	6-1	212	25	3	San Jose State
41 Maxwell, Byron	CB	6-1	207	30	8	Clemson
30 McDougald, Bradley	FS	6-1	215	27	6	Kansas
29 Thomas, Earl	FS	5-10	202	29	9	Texas
33 Thompson, Tedric	FS	6-0	204	23	2	Colorado
23 Thorpe, Neiko	CB	6-2	210	28	6	Auburn
40 Tyson, Mike	CB	6-1	207	25	1	Cincinnati

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
11 Janikowski, Sebastian	K	6-1	265	40	19	Florida State
2 Myers, Jason	K	5-10	190	27	4	Marist
69 Ott, Tyler	LS	6-3	253	26	4	Harvard
9 Ryan, Jon	P	6-0	217	36	13	Regina (Canada)

ARIZONA
CARDINALS

Patrick Peterson, CB

PETERSON: RICK SCUTERI / AP

↘ 2018 SCHEDULE

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Washington	@ L.A. Rams	Chicago	Seattle	@ San Francisco	@ Minnesota	Denver	San Francisco
Sept. 9 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 16 / 4:05 PM	Sept. 23 / 4:25 PM	Sept. 30 / 4:05 PM	Oct. 7 / 4:25 PM	Oct. 14 / 1:00 PM	Oct. 18 / 8:20 PM	Oct. 28 / 4:25 PM

2017 RECORD

OVERALL: 8-8 **HOME:** 5-3
CONFERENCE: 5-7 **DIVISION:** 3-3

HEAD COACH STEVE WILKS (FIRST YEAR)
CAREER RECORD: 0-0

▶ **ONLINE:** www.azcardinals.com
▶ **TWITTER:** @AZCardinals
▶ **TICKETS:** 602-379-0102
▶ **STADIUM:** University of Phoenix Stadium
▶ **CAPACITY:** 63,400
▶ **TURF:** Grass

Too many questions to be answered on offense for Cardinals to fly very high

BY KENT SOMERS
The Arizona Republic

Over the past five years, the Cardinals produced more wins and more great quotes than at any other time in their history.

But coach Bruce Arians, the man partially responsible for the victories and primarily responsible for the quotes, retired. So did quarterback Carson Palmer.

Those departures pivoted the team into a new era. Steve Wilks takes over as head coach and Sam Bradford was signed to be the starting quarterback.

Wilks won't produce the soundbytes Arians did but, like Arians, he doesn't lack for confidence.

"I'll tell you right now, you guys made the right decision," Wilks told general manager Steve Keim and team president Michael Bidwill at his introductory press conference. "I really believe that."

Wilks acknowledges the strength of the division, but he isn't about to try to manage expectations.

"I feel like we're right there in the mix as well," he says. "Again, I've said from Day One: I don't think it's a rebuild, it's a retool."

OFFENSE

This unit underwent a transformation in the offseason, mostly out of necessity. The coaches are new. The quarterbacks are new. The right side of the line is new. A good portion of the receiving corps is new. Coordinator Mike McCoy is experienced but there figures to be some rough spots early in the season as the Cardinals learn the system and each other. There is good news. Running back David Johnson is back after missing 15 games a year ago. Receiver Larry Fitzgerald turns 35 in August but is producing like he's 25. If the starting offensive line can stay healthy, it will be improved over recent years. But it's hard to imagine the Cardinals lighting up scoreboards in 2018.

QUARTERBACKS: Bradford was signed as a possible bridge to the future. The length of that bridge decreased considerably when UCLA star Josh Rosen was drafted 10th overall. Bradford, who will make at least $15 million this year, will be the starter, provided he stays healthy. That's a big caveat because he hasn't been able to do that often in his career. Ideally for the Cardinals, Bradford will start the entire season, play well, and Rosen will watch and learn behind him, maybe even as the third quarterback behind Mike Glennon. Overall, the quarterback position underwent a remarkable makeover in the offseason. The Cardinals had no quarterbacks on the roster to open free agency and now have their quarterback of the present (Bradford) and future (Rosen). They are similar in

PREDICTED FINISH NFC WEST 4

2018 PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Sam Bradford
	Mike Glennon
RB	David Johnson
	Elijhaa Penny
LT	D.J. Humphries
	John Wetzel
LG	Mike Iupati
	Daniel Munyer
C	A.Q. Shipley
	Evan Boehm
RG	Justin Pugh
	Mason Cole
RT	Andre Smith
	Will Holden
TE	Jermaine Gresham
	Ricky Seals-Jones
WR	Larry Fitzgerald
	Brice Butler
WR	J.J. Nelson
	Christian Kirk
WR	Brice Butler
	Rashad Ross

DEFENSE

DE	Markus Golden
	Bryson Albright
DT	Olsen Pierre
	Rodney Gunter
DT	Corey Peters
	Robert Nkemdiche
DE	Chandler Jones
	Bryson Albright
OLB	Deone Bucannon
	Jeremy Cash
MLB	Josh Bynes
	Scooby Wright
OLB	Haason Reddick
	Gabe Martin
CB	Patrick Peterson
	Brandon Williams
CB	Marcus Williams
	Brandon Williams
S	Budda Baker
	Harlan Miller
S	Antoine Bethea
	Rudy Ford

SPECIALISTS

LS	Aaron Brewer
P	Andy Lee
K	Phil Dawson
KR	T.J. Logan
PR	Christian Kirk

BYE: WEEK 9 Sunday night games in Weeks 5-16 subject to change. All times Eastern.

Week 10	**Week 11**	**Week 12**	**Week 13**	**Week 14**	**Week 15**	**Week 16**	**Week 17**
@ Kansas City	Oakland	@ L.A. Chargers	@ Green Bay	Detroit	@ Atlanta	L.A. Rams	@ Seattle
Nov. 11 / 1:00 PM	Nov. 18 / 4:05 PM	Nov. 25 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 2 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 9 / 4:25 PM	Dec. 16 / 1:00 PM	Dec. 23 / 4:05 PM	Dec. 30 / 4:25 PM

ARIZONA **CARDINALS**

David Johnson, RB

↘ **5-YEAR WIN TREND**
49-30-1

	PL	PL		

10-6 11-5 13-3 7-8-1 8-8
2013 2014 2015 2016 2017

WIN **LOSS** **TIE**

PL: Playoffs • **CT:** Conference Title
SB: Super Bowl Champion

style. Both are tall, have strong arms and are accurate. McCoy can work with that, as long as the Cardinals can protect the quarterback. That has been a problem the last two years.

RUNNING BACKS: The course of last season changed in Week One when Johnson went down with a dislocated wrist. He missed the rest of the year, and the offense seemed to lack a compass. Johnson is back, healthy, and there's no reason to think he won't post numbers similar to 2016 when he gained 2,118 yards from scrimmage and scored 20 touchdowns. He's as good as any running back in the NFL, and McCoy has been around long enough to know how to get him the ball. But depth is a concern. Coaches like what they see out of T.J. Logan, who missed last year with a wrist injury. But at 195 pounds, Logan is nearly 30 pounds lighter than Johnson.

If Johnson gets hurt, the offense would have to change because the Cardinals don't have a back who looks and plays remotely like him. Elijhaa Penny is a rugged, big back who might play some fullback, a position that didn't exist in Arians' offense.

RECEIVERS: Fitzgerald has finished each of the last three seasons with more than 100 receptions and 1,000 yards. That's remarkable for someone who will turn 35 in August. There's no reason to think he can't post similar numbers again. The problem is finding someone else to contribute. The most likely candidate is rookie Christian Kirk, the second-round pick from Texas A&M. He's dynamic and very serious about becoming one of the better receivers in the game. Free agent Brice Butler has intriguing skills but was never a prominent feature in the Cowboys' offense. The group would be
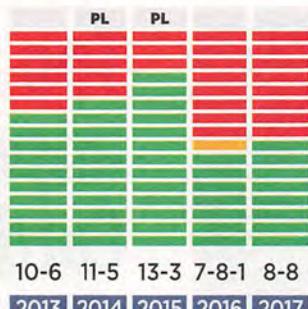
bolstered if Chad Williams, a third-round pick from a year ago, emerges after catching only three passes as a rookie.

The tight end position is one of the offense's biggest weaknesses. Jermaine Gresham suffered a ruptured Achilles and may not be ready by the start of the season. Ricky Seals-Jones could be a great threat in the passing game but needs to work on his blocking.

OFFENSIVE LINE: Palmer took a beating the last two seasons, mostly because of injuries and poor performances by the people who were charged with blocking for him. The Cardinals are counting on the signings of free-agent guard Justin Pugh and tackle Andre Smith to solidify the right side. They're hoping left tackle D.J. Humphries is ready to go for the opener after knee surgery last year, and that left guard Mike Iupati can stay healthy. Of the five expected starters, only

JOHNSON: ROSS D. FRANKLIN / AP; FITZGERALD: MARK TENALLY / AP

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDELINE

An opponent breaks down the Cardinals

"He (Steve Wilks) is a first-year coach and clearly his expertise is on the defensive side of the ball. There is no track record. I know he's a good defensive coach. He's a grinder, he's a good person, he's smart. (Ron) Rivera loved him, but it's different when they all of a sudden put that "HC" on your hat and it's yours. They have serious questions on offense. They rode (Carson) Palmer and Bruce (Arians)

and **Larry (Fitzgerald)** for as long as they could and I don't blame them for doing it. They should be good defensively, so they're going to have to play complementary football to the max. Special teams comes into it and also clock management by the head coach. If you're trying to play that type of game, your head coach has to be a master at clock management and I have no idea how good he (Wilks) is at it. No one has ever seen him do it. But I know this: He needs to be studying up on it."

2017 FINAL STATS

DATE	W/L	SCORE	OPPONENT
09/10	L	23-35	Detroit Lions
09/17	W	16-13	Indianapolis Colts
09/25	L	17-28	Dallas Cowboys
10/01	W	18-15	San Francisco 49ers
10/08	L	7-34	Philadelphia Eagles
10/15	W	38-33	Tampa Bay Buccaneers
10/22	L	0-33	Los Angeles Rams
11/05	W	20-10	San Francisco 49ers
11/09	L	16-22	Seattle Seahawks
11/19	L	21-31	Houston Texans
11/26	W	27-24	Jacksonville Jaguars
12/03	L	16-32	Los Angeles Rams
12/10	W	12-7	Tennessee Titans
12/17	L	15-20	Washington Redskins
12/24	W	23-0	New York Giants
12/31	W	26-24	Seattle Seahawks

2017 RECORD: 8-8

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
A. Peterson	129	448	3.5	27t	2
K. Williams	120	426	3.6	25	1
C. Johnson	45	114	2.5	11	0
Penny	31	124	4.0	14	2
Gabbert	22	82	3.7	12	0
Ellington	15	53	3.5	14	1
Palmer	14	12	0.9	4	0
D. Johnson	11	23	2.1	6	0
Stanton	9	7	0.8	5	0
Foster	6	19	3.2	5	0
Nelson	3	37	12.3	16	0
C. Williams	2	33	16.5	33	0
Jo. Brown	1	10	10.0	10	0
Hill	1	-2	-2.0	-2	0
ARIZONA	**409**	**1,386**	**3.4**	**33**	**6**
OPPONENTS	406	1,434	3.5	37	12

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Fitzgerald	109	1,156	10.6	37	6
Gresham	33	322	9.8	21	2
Ellington	33	297	9.0	24	0
Ja. Brown	31	477	15.4	52t	4
Nelson	29	508	17.5	46	2
Jo. Brown	21	299	14.2	52	3
Foster	17	133	7.8	20	0
Seals-Jones	12	201	16.8	29t	3
Niklas	11	132	12.0	21	1
K. Williams	10	93	9.3	25	0
A. Peterson	9	66	7.3	13	0
D. Johnson	6	67	11.2	24	0
Golden	5	70	14.0	29	0
C. Johnson	5	43	8.6	15	0
Penny	4	38	9.5	18	0
C. Williams	3	31	10.3	15	0
Momah	1	46	46.0	46	0
ARIZONA	**339**	**3,979**	**11.7**	**52t**	**21**
OPPONENTS	343	3,796	11.1	72t	24

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Palmer	267	164	1,978	9	7
Gabbert	171	95	1,086	6	6
Stanton	159	79	894	6	5
Fitzgerald	1	1	21	0	0
ARIZONA	**598**	**339**	**3,640**	**21**	**18**
OPPONENTS	564	343	3,541	24	15

KICK RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
K. Williams	16	326	20.4	28	0
Foster	8	184	23.0	55	0
Golden	4	81	20.3	26	0
Niklas	1	1	1.0	1	0
ARIZONA	**29**	**592**	**20.4**	**55**	**0**
OPPONENTS	40	880	22.0	99t	1

PUNT RETURNS	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
K. Williams	21	137	6.5	20	0
P. Peterson	13	88	6.8	19	0
Golden	7	63	9.0	15	0
ARIZONA	**41**	**288**	**7.0**	**20**	**0**
OPPONENTS	48	506	10.5	76	0

SACKS

ARIZONA 37.0, OPPONENTS 52.0

Chandler Jones
17.0 sacks

Jones 17.0, Pierre 5.5, Reddick 2.5, Rucker 1.5, Baker 1.0, Bethea 1.0, Bucannon 1.0, Bynes 1.0, Dansby 1.0, Gunter 1.0, Martin 1.0, Mathieu 1.0, Mauro 1.0, Peters 1.0, X. Williams 0.5

2017 NUMBERS

CATEGORY	TEAM STATS	NFL RANK
Total offense	314.1	22
Rushing	86.6	30
Passing	227.5	15
Scoring	18.4	25
Punt returns	7.0	22
Kick returns	20.4	22
Red zone TD%	41.7	30
Total defense	310.9	6
Against rush	89.6	6
Against pass	221.3	14
Points allowed	22.6	19
Interceptions	15	12
Sacks	37.0	17t
Turnover diff.	-4	23t

center A.Q. Shipley didn't finish last season on injured reserve. Humphries is on the verge of becoming an above-average player, and Pugh played at that level when healthy for the Giants. One of the big problems up front is the lack of depth. That's partly a result of young players not developing as expected. Performances could be rough early in the season as the linemen learn to play together and coaches learn what they can and can't do.

DEFENSE

The 4-3 will be the team's base defense for the first time since 2006, but the change from the 3-4 isn't as drastic as it used to be. With offenses spreading the field more, even 3-4 teams are using four-man fronts most of the time, and coaches think Markus Golden and Chandler Jones can be just as effective in a three-point stance as ends as they were standing up as linebackers. Wilks was a defensive coordinator in Carolina for only one year and showed a willingness to do whatever it took to pressure the quarterback. He and his defensive coordinator in Arizona, Al Holcomb, have some tools to work with, including Golden, Jones, Patrick Peterson and Budda Baker.

DEFENSIVE LINE: Tackle Robert Nkemdiche is entering his third NFL season, and the Cardinals still aren't sure what they have in him. That's not a good thing for a former first-round pick. Nkemdiche has dealt with some nagging injuries, but his performance has been subpar, too. He's been outplayed by Olsen Pierre, who entered the NFL as a rookie free agent. Nkemdiche's performance this year will determine if he is a bust. Pierre played well last season and has proven he can provide a rush from inside. Corey

INSIDE THE HEADSET

Arizona head coach Steve Wilks

Wilks was a defensive coordinator for only one season before being hired away from Carolina, but in that one year he provided an idea of what his style will be as head coach. Under Wilks, the Panthers blitzed considerably more than previous seasons. That was partially because they lacked a pass rush from the front four, but it was also an example of Wilks taking advantage of the talent at hand. Wilks is very sure of himself. It's why he didn't hesitate switching from a 3-4 base defense to a 4-3, even though the Cardinals had finished in the top six in defense four of the previous five seasons. Wilks has said several times he wants the run game to be the emphasis on offense, but at this point it's impossible to know if the Cardinals will have a power- or zone-blocking scheme.

ARIZONA **CARDINALS**

Peters returns to start at tackle. He's not flashy, but he rarely makes mistakes and he's athletic enough to chase down runners. There is not a ton of depth at the two tackle spots, so it would help if Rodney Gunter fulfilled expectations. The team thought it pulled a steal when it drafted him in the fourth round in 2015. Instead, Gunter has played like a fourth-rounder–just OK, nothing more.

The change from a 3-4 base to a 4-3 base probably has the biggest impact on Golden and Jones, former outside linebackers now playing defensive end. But the transition shouldn't be too difficult. Both played end in college, and Jones played there with the Patriots. There also will be times when they are standing up. Both are accomplished pass rushers, and last year Jones was as good as any defensive player in the NFL. He led the league in sacks with 17.

LINEBACKERS: Deone Bucannon will keep the "money linebacker" designation, but in reality he's the "Will" or weakside 'backer in Wilks' defense. He is calling the defensive signals and will move to middle linebacker in nickel. Next to him will be veteran Josh Bynes, who played well after signing with the team last August. Bynes runs well and is smart. Defensive coordinator Holcomb comes over from Carolina, where he had

Luke Kuechly and Thomas Davis playing together. Bucannon and Bynes aren't as good, but they should be a productive duo. Haason Reddick, the first-round pick in 2017, starts on the strongside.

SECONDARY: Three of the four starters in the base unit return: cornerback Peterson and safeties Baker and Antoine Bethea. That should be a comforting feeling for coaches because all are above average. Peterson, the perennial Pro Bowler, might be used differently than the last few years when he defended the best receiver each week. The problem with that scheme is that quarterbacks tended to throw away from Peterson, which is why he had just one interception a year ago and only six in the last three years. He's dying to improve on that stat. Maybe the Cardinals will keep Peterson on the left side of the field more, or perhaps play more zone concepts, which would allow Peterson to better read quarterbacks. Baker takes over for Tyrann Mathieu, who was released, and coaches don't think there will be a decline in play. Bethea, entering his 13th season, led the team in interceptions a year ago. The weakness of this group is at cornerback. There is no clear favorite to win the starting job opposite Peterson.

SPECIAL TEAMS: Poor performances in this area have cost the

Right guard **Justin Pugh** should immediately provide an upgrade at a position of weakness throughout 2018. He had injury problems with the Giants, but he's young (28 in August), tough and athletic. The Cardinals desperately needed to improve up front and signing Pugh was a step toward that goal. It made sense to pay money for someone to open holes for running back David Johnson and protect quarterback Sam Bradford.

Cardinals several games over the past three seasons. There have been far too many bad snaps, blocked kicks, missed kicks and long punt returns by opponents. Even grizzled veterans such as kicker Phil Dawson and punter Andy Lee struggled in the first half of last season. Both return; Dawson for his 20th NFL season and Lee for his 15th. Backup running back Logan was an excellent kick returner in college at North Carolina, and he's back after missing all of last season, his rookie year, with a dislocated wrist. Kirk should give the Cardinals a threat on punt returns and allow Peterson to focus on his duties in the secondary. The Cardinals have long wanted to eliminate special teams from Peterson's game-day load, but have had trouble finding a competent replacement on returns.

Jeff Rodgers, a seasoned special-teams coordinator, takes over, which should help. The Cardinals need to start doing the simple things correctly; stop blowing block assignments and maintain lane discipline in coverage.

BOTTOM LINE

Wilks faces great challenges in his first year. The Cardinals have rebuilt their offense, but there are questions everywhere on that side of the ball. A strong case could be made that they will finish last in the NFC West.

2018 TEAM GRADE: C-
2018 STOCKWATCH: UNDERPERFORM

THE LAST TIME ...

... the Cardinals had a receiver with at least 1,500 yards in a season was **2001 when David Boston caught 98 passes for a franchise-record 1,598 yards.** It stands as one of only three 1,500-yard seasons for a pass catcher from the Arizona franchise. Rob Moore (1,584 yards) and Roy Green (1,555) did it in 1997 and 1984, respectively.

⊾ NEW ARRIVALS
as of May 1

- **OG** Justin Pugh
  (free agent, N.Y. Giants)
- **QB** Mike Glennon
  (free agent, Chicago)
- **OT** Andre Smith
  (free agent, Cincinnati)
- **QB** Sam Bradford
  (free agent, Minnesota)
- **WR** Brice Butler
  (free agent, Dallas)
- **DE** Benson Mayowa
  (free agent, Dallas)

Sam Bradford

THE DRAFT REPORT

The Cardinals drafted a quarterback in the first three rounds for the first time since taking Matt Leinart No. 10 overall in 2006. **Josh Rosen** also was the 10th overall pick and fills a vital need: a possible franchise player going forward. Rosen will play behind Sam Bradford as long as Bradford remains healthy. Christian Kirk is the most likely member of the rookie class to make an immediate impact. He's more developed than most receivers coming out of college and the Cardinals have a need. Kirk also can return punts, filling another need. Patrick Peterson will no longer have to return punts, a job he has done out of necessity the last few years.

2018 DRAFT GRADE
A
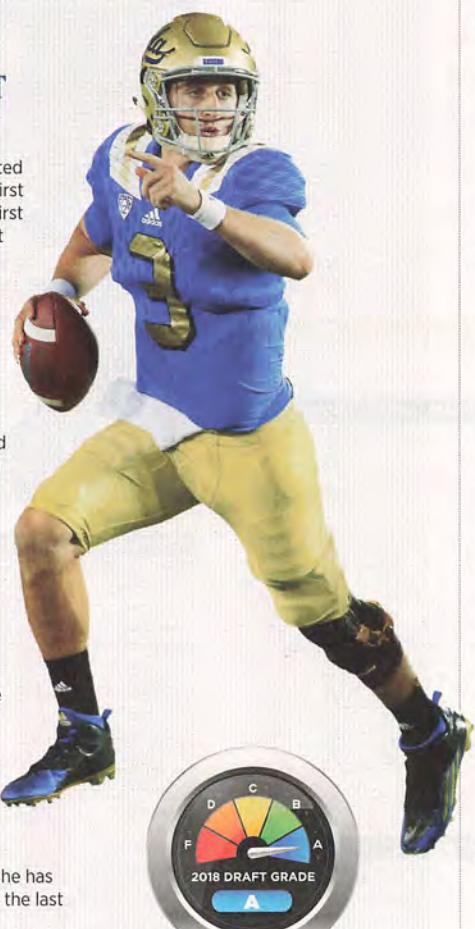
⊾ THE CARDINALS' 2018 DRAFTEES

RD	PK	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	AGE	COLLEGE
1	10	Josh Rosen	QB	6-4	226	21	UCLA
2	47	Christian Kirk	WR	5-11	200	21	Texas A&M
3	97	Mason Cole	OL	6-5	292	22	Michigan
4	134	Chase Edmonds	RB	5-9	210	22	Fordham
6	182	Chris Campbell	CB	6-1	195	22	Penn State
7	254	Korey Cunningham	OL	6-6	305	23	Cincinnati

⊾ VETERAN ROSTER / STAFF as of May 1

COACHES: Steve Wilks, **Head Coach;** Mike McCoy, **Offensive Coordinator;** Al Holcomb, **Defensive Coordinator;** Jeff Rodgers, **Special Teams Coordinator**

QUARTERBACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
9	Bradford, Sam	QB	6-4	224	30	9	Oklahoma
6	Doughty, Brandon	QB	6-3	212	26	1	Western Kentucky
7	Glennon, Mike	QB	6-6	229	28	6	N.C. State
5	Torgersen, Alek	QB	6-2	229	23	1	Pennsylvania

OFFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
66	Allen, Josh	OL	6-3	315	26	2	Louisiana-Monroe
70	Boehm, Evan	OL	6-3	310	25	3	Missouri
69	Holden, Will	OL	6-7	312	24	2	Vanderbilt
74	Humphries, D.J.	OL	6-5	307	24	4	Florida
76	Iupati, Mike	OL	6-5	331	31	9	Idaho
62	Munyer, Daniel	OL	6-1	305	26	2	Colorado
78	Painter, Vinston	OL	6-4	318	28	4	Virginia Tech
67	Pugh, Justin	OL	6-5	311	28	6	Syracuse
53	Shipley, A.O.	OL	6-1	307	32	7	Penn State
71	Smith, Andre	OL	6-4	330	31	10	Alabama
73	Wetzel, John	OL	6-7	328	27	3	Boston College

RUNNING BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
37	Foster, D.J.	RB	6-0	195	24	3	Arizona State
48	Hill, Bronson	RB	5-10	215	25	3	Eastern Michigan
31	Johnson, David	RB	6-1	224	26	4	Northern Iowa
22	Logan, T.J.	RB	5-10	195	24	2	North Carolina
35	Penny, Elijhaa	RB	6-2	234	25	2	Idaho
38	Victor, Darius	RB	5-8	209	24	1	Towson

RECEIVERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
19	Agudosi, Carlton	WR	6-6	220	24	1	Rutgers
18	Butler, Brice	WR	6-3	220	28	6	San Diego State
11	Fitzgerald, Larry	WR	6-3	218	35	15	Pittsburgh
84	Gresham, Jermaine	TE	6-5	260	30	9	Oklahoma
12	Hamilton, Cobi	WR	6-2	201	27	3	Arkansas
85	Holmes, Gabe	TE	6-5	255	27	1	Purdue
14	Nelson, J.J.	WR	5-10	160	26	4	UAB
15	Ross, Rashad	WR	6-0	180	28	3	Arizona State
81	Sandland, Beau	TE	6-5	255	25	1	Montana State
86	Seals-Jones, Ricky	TE	6-5	243	23	2	Texas A&M
80	Williams, Bryce	TE	6-5	260	25	1	East Carolina
10	Williams, Chad	WR	6-1	204	23	2	Grambling State

DEFENSIVE LINE		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
54	Albright, Bryson	DE	6-5	235	24	2	Miami (Ohio)
63	Anau, Peli	DT	6-3	282	24	1	Northern Arizona
61	Djeri, Moubarak	DE	6-3	275	22	0	None
44	Golden, Markus	DE	6-3	260	27	4	Missouri
95	Gunter, Rodney	DT	6-5	305	26	4	Delaware State
55	Jones, Chandler	DE	6-5	265	28	7	Syracuse
51	Martin-Oguike, Praise	DE	6-1	256	25	1	Temple
91	Mayowa, Benson	DE	6-3	265	27	6	Idaho
90	Nkemdiche, Robert	DT	6-4	296	23	3	Ole Miss
98	Peters, Corey	DT	6-3	305	30	9	Kentucky
72	Pierre, Olsen	DT	6-5	293	27	2	Miami (Fla.)
65	Tasini, Pasoni	DT	6-3	295	25	1	Utah

LINEBACKERS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
20	Bucannon, Deone	LB	6-1	211	26	5	Washington State
57	Bynes, Josh	LB	6-1	235	29	7	Auburn
52	Cash, Jeremy	LB	6-0	230	25	3	Duke
59	Dora, Vontarrius	LB	6-5	256	26	1	Louisiana Tech
50	Martin, Gabe	LB	6-2	235	26	3	Bowling Green
43	Reddick, Haason	LB	6-1	235	23	2	Temple
58	Robinson, Edmond	LB	6-3	245	26	3	Newberry
56	Wright III, Scooby	LB	6-0	240	24	3	Arizona

DEFENSIVE BACKS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
36	Baker, Budda	S	5-10	195	22	2	Washington
23	Benwikere, Bene	CB	6-0	195	27	5	San Jose State
41	Bethea, Antoine	S	5-11	206	34	13	Howard
39	Carter, Jarell	CB	5-10	196	23	1	Trinity International
30	Ford, Rudy	S	6-0	204	23	2	Auburn
42	Goodwin, C.J.	CB	6-4	220	28	3	California (Pa.)
34	Miller, Harlan	S	6-0	182	24	2	Southeastern Louisiana
25	Moxey, Jonathan	CB	5-10	188	23	1	Boise State
21	Peterson, Patrick	CB	6-1	203	28	8	LSU
26	Williams, Brandon	CB	6-0	200	26	3	Texas A&M
28	Williams, Marcus	CB	5-11	196	27	5	North Dakota State
32	Young III, Lou	CB	6-0	205	26	2	Georgia Tech

SPECIALISTS		HT	WT	AGE	EXP	COLLEGE
46	Brewer, Aaron	LS	6-5	232	28	7	San Diego State
4	Dawson, Phil	K	5-11	200	43	20	Texas
2	Lee, Andy	P	6-1	185	36	15	Pittsburgh
47	Williams, Drew	LS	6-2	215	24	0	South Carolina

2017 AFC STATS → Compiled by Will Long

New England Patriots 458 points

TEAM SCORING

TEAM	TD	TDR	TDP	TDM	XP	XPA	2PT	2PTA	FG	FGA	SAF	POINTS
New England Patriots	49	16	32	1	45	47	2	2	37	40	2	458
Jacksonville Jaguars	47	18	21	8	37	41	3	6	30	35	0	417
Kansas City Chiefs	42	12	26	4	40	40	0	2	41	45	0	415
Pittsburgh Steelers	43	12	29	2	37	39	2	4	35	38	1	406
Baltimore Ravens	42	14	20	8	39	39	1	3	34	37	0	395
Los Angeles Chargers	43	10	28	5	37	42	0	1	20	20	0	355
Houston Texans	40	8	28	4	32	35	2	5	20	25	1	338
Tennessee Titans	33	18	14	1	31	33	0	0	35	42	0	334
Buffalo Bills	31	12	16	3	29	29	0	1	29	33	0	302
Oakland Raiders	36	13	23	0	33	34	2	2	16	21	0	301
New York Jets	32	13	19	0	29	29	1	3	25	30	0	298
Cincinnati Bengals	34	6	25	3	32	34	0	0	18	20	0	290
Denver Broncos	31	8	19	4	27	27	2	4	24	32	0	289
Miami Dolphins	31	4	24	3	26	29	1	1	21	23	2	281
Indianapolis Colts	25	11	13	1	22	24	0	1	29	34	2	263
Cleveland Browns	27	11	15	1	25	26	1	1	15	20	0	234
AFC AVERAGE	36.6	11.6	22.0	3.0	32.6	34.3	1.1	2.3	26.8	31.6	0.5	336.0

PASSING

204+ ATTEMPTS	TEAM	ATT	COMP	PCT	YDS	AVG	TD	TD%	LONG	INT	INT%	SACKS	LOSS	RATING
Alex Smith	KC	505	341	67.5	4,042	8.0	26	5.1	79t	5	1.0	35	207	104.7
Deshaun Watson	HOU	204	126	61.8	1,699	8.3	19	9.3	72t	8	3.9	19	116	103.0
Tom Brady	NE	581	385	66.3	4,577	7.9	32	5.5	64t	8	1.4	35	201	102.8
Philip Rivers	LAC	575	360	62.6	4,515	7.9	28	4.9	75t	10	1.7	18	120	96.0
Josh McCown	NYJ	397	267	67.3	2,926	7.4	18	4.5	69t	9	2.3	39	264	94.5
Ben Roethlisberger	PIT	561	360	64.2	4,251	7.6	28	5.0	97t	14	2.5	21	139	93.4
Tyrod Taylor	BUF	420	263	62.6	2,799	6.7	14	3.3	47	4	1.0	46	256	89.2
Andy Dalton	CIN	496	297	59.9	3,320	6.7	25	5.0	77t	12	2.4	39	255	86.6
Derek Carr	OAK	515	323	62.7	3,496	6.8	22	4.3	87t	13	2.5	20	101	86.4
Blake Bortles	JAC	523	315	60.2	3,687	7.0	21	4.0	75t	13	2.5	24	123	84.7
Jacoby Brissett	IND	469	276	58.8	3,098	6.6	13	2.8	80t	7	1.5	52	305	81.7
Jay Cutler	MIA	429	266	62.0	2,666	6.2	19	4.4	65t	14	3.3	20	154	80.8
Joe Flacco	BAL	549	352	64.1	3,141	5.7	18	3.3	66	13	2.4	27	205	80.4
Marcus Mariota	TEN	453	281	62.0	3,232	7.1	13	2.9	75t	15	3.3	27	173	79.3
Trevor Siemian	DEN	349	206	59.0	2,285	6.5	12	3.4	44	14	4.0	33	220	73.3
Tom Savage	HOU	223	125	56.1	1,412	6.3	5	2.2	57	6	2.7	21	159	71.4
DeShone Kizer	CLE	476	255	53.6	2,894	6.1	11	2.3	56t	22	4.6	38	226	60.5

NET PUNTING

43+ PUNTS	TEAM	NO	YARDS	LONG	AVG	TB	BLK	OPP RET	RET YDS	IN 20	NET AVG
Brett Kern	TEN	75	3728	74	49.7	5	0	40	286	28	44.6
Marquette King	OAK	69	3270	65	47.4	6	0	32	205	28	42.7
Rigoberto Sanchez	IND	84	3764	61	44.8	3	1	19	80	28	42.6
Drew Kaser	LAC	74	3558	69	48.1	9	0	48	319	27	41.3
Shane Lechler	HOU	92	4507	68	49.0	5	0	49	608	32	41.3
Dustin Colquitt	KC	65	2936	77	45.2	5	0	24	164	29	41.1
Kevin Huber	CIN	88	4101	63	46.6	3	1	43	410	32	40.8
Matt Haack	MIA	83	3695	64	44.5	5	0	35	220	30	40.7
Britton Colquitt	CLE	80	3811	67	47.6	2	1	45	482	24	40.6
Ryan Allen	NE	58	2515	60	43.4	3	0	23	105	24	40.5
Lac Edwards	NYJ	94	4378	70	46.6	4	0	49	491	33	40.5
Colton Schmidt	BUF	79	3529	60	44.7	6	0	38	210	28	40.5
Sam Koch	BAL	84	3765	67	44.8	3	1	34	277	40	40.3
Riley Dixon	DEN	73	3331	60	45.6	3	2	30	258	23	40.2
Jordan Berry	PIT	64	2763	62	43.2	2	0	23	177	26	39.8
Brad Nortman	JAC	87	3835	65	44.1	9	1	30	228	29	38.9

SCORING

KICKERS	TEAM	XP	XPA	FG	FGA	PTS
Stephen Gostkowski	NE	45	47	37	40	156
Chris Boswell	PIT	37	39	35	38	142
Harrison Butker	KC	28	28	38	42	142
Justin Tucker	BAL	39	39	34	37	141
Ryan Succop	TEN	31	33	35	42	136
Steven Hauschka	BUF	29	29	29	33	116
Adam Vinatieri	IND	22	24	29	34	109
Chandler Catanzaro	NYJ	29	29	25	30	104
Brandon McManus	DEN	27	27	24	32	99
Ka'imi Fairbairn	HOU	32	35	20	25	92
Cody Parkey	MIA	26	29	21	23	89
Randy Bullock	CIN	31	33	18	20	85
Giorgio Tavecchio	OAK	33	34	16	21	81
Josh Lambo	JAC	22	24	19	20	79
Zane Gonzalez	CLE	25	26	15	20	70
Jason Myers	JAC	15	17	11	15	48
Nick Novak	LAC	17	18	9	13	44

DeAndre Hopkins, Houston Texans
78 points

NON-KICKERS	TEAM	TD	TDR	TDP	TDM	2PT	PTS
DeAndre Hopkins	HOU	13	0	13	0	0	78
Melvin Gordon	LAC	12	8	4	0	0	72
Le'Veon Bell	PIT	11	9	2	0	0	66
Kareem Hunt	KC	11	8	3	0	0	66
Leonard Fournette	JAC	10	9	1	0	0	60
Dion Lewis	NE	10	6	3	1	0	60
Antonio Brown	PIT	9	0	9	0	1	56
Jarvis Landry	MIA	9	0	9	0	0	54
Michael Crabtree	OAK	8	0	8	0	2	52
Rob Gronkowski	NE	8	0	8	0	1	50
Rex Burkhead	NE	8	5	3	0	0	48
A.J. Green	CIN	8	0	8	0	0	48
Tyreek Hill	KC	8	0	7	1	0	48
Travis Kelce	KC	8	0	8	0	0	48
LeSean McCoy	BUF	8	6	2	0	0	48
J. Smith-Schuster	PIT	8	0	7	1	0	48
Brandin Cooks	NE	7	0	7	0	1	44
Keenan Allen	LAC	7	0	6	1	0	42
Robby Anderson	NYJ	7	0	7	0	0	42
Amari Cooper	OAK	7	0	7	0	0	42
Will Fuller	HOU	7	0	7	0	0	42
Duke Johnson Jr.	CLE	7	4	3	0	0	42
Tyler Kroft	CIN	7	0	7	0	0	42
Marshawn Lynch	OAK	7	7	0	0	0	42
DeMarco Murray	TEN	7	6	1	0	0	42
Javorius Allen	BAL	6	4	2	0	0	36
Alex Collins	BAL	6	6	0	0	0	36
Derrick Henry	TEN	6	5	1	0	0	36
Lamar Miller	HOU	6	3	3	0	0	36
Kenny Stills	MIA	6	0	6	0	0	36
Marcedes Lewis	JAC	5	0	5	0	1	32

SACKS

4.5+ SACKS	TEAM	NO
Calais Campbell	JAC	14.5
Joey Bosa	LAC	12.5
Cameron Heyward	PIT	12.0
Yannick Ngakoue	JAC	12.0
Terrell Suggs	BAL	11.0
Melvin Ingram	LAC	10.5
Khalil Mack	OAK	10.5
Cameron Wake	MIA	10.5
Von Miller	DEN	10.0
Jadeveon Clowney	HOU	9.5
Justin Houston	KC	9.5
Geno Atkins	CIN	9.0
Carl Lawson	CIN	8.5
Dante Fowler Jr.	JAC	8.0
Bruce Irvin	OAK	8.0
Malik Jackson	JAC	8.0
Matt Judon	BAL	8.0
Vince Williams	PIT	8.0
Carlos Dunlap	CIN	7.5
Derrick Morgan	TEN	7.5
Myles Garrett	CLE	7.0
Brian Orakpo	TEN	7.0
T.J. Watt	PIT	7.0
Trey Flowers	NE	6.5
Chris Jones	KC	6.5
Jurrell Casey	TEN	6.0
Bud Dupree	PIT	6.0
Shelby Harris	DEN	5.5
Jabaal Sheard	IND	5.5
Kyle Van Noy	NE	5.5
Denico Autry	OAK	5.0
Demario Davis	NYJ	5.0
Michael Johnson	CIN	5.0
Chris McCain	LAC	5.0
Deatrich Wise	NE	5.0
Wesley Woodyard	TEN	5.0
Andre Branch	MIA	4.5
Darius Philon	LAC	4.5
Ndamukong Suh	MIA	4.5

Calais Campbell, Jacksonville Jaguars
14.5 sacks

TACKLES

90+ TACKLES	TEAM	NO
Preston Brown	BUF	144
Joe Schobert	CLE	144
Christian Kirksey	CLE	138
Demario Davis	NYJ	135
C.J. Mosley	BAL	132
Wesley Woodyard	TEN	124
Reshad Jones	MIA	122
Kiko Alonso	MIA	115
Antonio Morrison	IND	109
Brandon Marshall	DEN	106
Telvin Smith	JAC	102
Matthias Farley	IND	98
Jon Bostic	IND	97
Devin McCourty	NE	97
Jahleel Addae	LAC	96
Benardrick McKinney	HOU	95
Jordan Poyer	BUF	95
Darron Lee	NYJ	94
Sean Davis	PIT	92
Avery Williamson	TEN	92
Zach Cunningham	HOU	90
Myles Jack	JAC	90
Patrick Onwuasor	BAL	90

INTERCEPTIONS

2+ INTERCEPTIONS	TEAM	NO	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Kevin Byard	TEN	8	130	16.3	33	0
A.J. Bouye	JAC	6	70	11.7	51	0
Eric Weddle	BAL	6	85	14.2	45t	1
Tre Boston	LAC	5	49	9.8	25	0
Micah Hyde	BUF	5	64	12.8	37	0
Marcus Peters	KC	5	137	27.4	62	0
Jordan Poyer	BUF	5	33	6.6	19t	1
Brandon Carr	BAL	4	57	14.3	33	0
Barry Church	JAC	4	51	12.8	51t	1
Tashaun Gipson	JAC	4	83	20.8	67	0
Duron Harmon	NE	4	12	3.0	12	0
Casey Hayward	LAC	4	7	1.8	7	0
Xavien Howard	MIA	4	71	17.8	30t	1
Terrance Mitchell	KC	4	40	10.0	40	0
Jalen Ramsey	JAC	4	34	8.5	18	0
Tre'Davious White	BUF	4	86	21.5	63	0
Sean Davis	PIT	3	76	25.3	41	0
Andre Hal	HOU	3	10	3.3	7	0
Malik Hooker	IND	3	73	24.3	32	0
Jason McCourty	CLE	3	59	19.7	56t	1
Rashaan Melvin	IND	3	28	9.3	21	0
Ryan Shazier	PIT	3	2	0.7	2	0
Jimmy Smith	BAL	3	58	19.3	50t	1
Telvin Smith	JAC	3	56	18.7	28t	1
Darian Stewart	DEN	3	33	11.0	24	0
Terrence Brooks	NYJ	2	13	6.5	13	0
Malcolm Butler	NE	2	-1	-0.5	1	0
Dylan Cole	HOU	2	28	14.0	25t	1
Darqueze Dennard	CIN	2	109	54.5	89t	1
Matthias Farley	IND	2	9	4.5	9	0
Stephon Gilmore	NE	2	59	29.5	39	0
Chris Harris	DEN	2	36	18.0	23	0
Mike Hilton	PIT	2	45	22.5	26	0
Marlon Humphrey	BAL	2	33	16.5	18	0
Reshad Jones	MIA	2	15	7.5	15	0
Johnathan Joseph	HOU	2	85	42.5	82t	1
Marcus Maye	NYJ	2	44	22.0	32	0
Bobby McCain	MIA	2	6	3.0	6	0
C.J. Mosley	BAL	2	94	47.0	63t	1
Ron Parker	KC	2	0	0.0	0	0
Adrian Phillips	LAC	2	13	6.5	9	0
Justin Simmons	DEN	2	65	32.5	65t	1
Sean Smith	OAK	2	8	4.0	8	0
Lardarius Webb	BAL	2	10	5.0	10	0
Trevor Williams	LAC	2	28	14.0	21	0

KICK RETURNS

14+ RETURNS	TEAM	NO	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Cordarrelle Patterson	OAK	19	538	28.3	49	0
Corey Grant	JAC	19	473	24.9	68	0
Dion Lewis	NE	23	570	24.8	103T	1
Akeem Hunt	KC	25	611	24.4	42	0
Matt Dayes	CLE	18	437	24.3	71	0
Adoree' Jackson	TEN	25	578	23.1	57	0
Jakeem Grant	MIA	21	479	22.8	31	0
Jabrill Peppers	CLE	14	318	22.7	35	0
Chris Thompson	HOU	17	369	21.7	42	0
Desmond King	LAC	17	353	20.8	44	0
Alex Erickson	CIN	32	663	20.7	41	0
JoJo Natson	NYJ	16	325	20.3	32	0
Devontae Booker	DEN	14	276	19.7	28	0
Brandon Tate	BUF	28	548	19.6	29	0

PUNT RETURNS

18+ RETURNS	TEAM	NO	FC	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Michael Campanaro	BAL	27	18	291	10.8	77t	1
Jaydon Mickens	JAC	27	19	287	10.6	72	1
Brandon Tate	BUF	20	6	193	9.7	40	0
Travis Benjamin	LAC	27	25	257	9.5	65t	1
Isaiah McKenzie	DEN	21	7	183	8.7	44	0
Danny Amendola	NE	27	18	231	8.6	40	0
Adoree' Jackson	TEN	34	9	290	8.5	46	0
Tyreek Hill	KC	25	9	204	8.2	82t	1
Eli Rogers	PIT	19	10	146	7.7	27	0
Jakeem Grant	MIA	25	11	190	7.6	27	0
Alex Erickson	CIN	39	19	278	7.1	29	0
Jabrill Peppers	CLE	30	15	180	6.0	25	0
Jalen Richard	OAK	26	13	155	6.0	19	0

Kareem Hunt, Kansas City Chiefs
1,327 yards rushing

RUSHING

341+ YARDS	TEAM	NO	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Kareem Hunt	KC	272	1,327	4.9	69t	8
Le'Veon Bell	PIT	321	1,291	4.0	27	9
LeSean McCoy	BUF	287	1,138	4.0	48t	6
Melvin Gordon	LAC	284	1,105	3.9	87t	8
Leonard Fournette	JAC	268	1,040	3.9	90t	9
C.J. Anderson	DEN	245	1,007	4.1	40	3
Alex Collins	BAL	212	973	4.6	50	6
Frank Gore	IND	261	961	3.7	21	3
Dion Lewis	NE	180	896	5.0	44	6
Marshawn Lynch	OAK	207	891	4.3	51t	7
Lamar Miller	HOU	238	888	3.7	21	3
Isaiah Crowell	CLE	206	853	4.1	59	2
Bilal Powell	NYJ	178	772	4.3	75t	5
Derrick Henry	TEN	176	744	4.2	75t	5
DeMarco Murray	TEN	184	659	3.6	75t	6
Kenyan Drake	MIA	133	644	4.8	66t	3
Joe Mixon	CIN	178	626	3.5	25	4
Javorius Allen	BAL	153	591	3.9	37	4
Giovani Bernard	CIN	105	458	4.4	25	2
Tyrod Taylor	BUF	84	427	5.1	32	4
DeShone Kizer	CLE	77	419	5.4	20	5
Mike Gillislee	NE	104	383	3.7	16	5
Chris Ivory	JAC	112	382	3.4	34	1
Matt Forte	NYJ	103	381	3.7	20	2
Marlon Mack	IND	93	358	3.8	35	3
Alex Smith	KC	60	355	5.9	70	1
Duke Johnson Jr.	CLE	82	348	4.2	19t	4

RECEPTIONS

46+ CATCHES	TEAM	NO	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Jarvis Landry	MIA	112	987	8.8	49	9
Keenan Allen	LAC	102	1,393	13.7	51	6
Antonio Brown	PIT	101	1,533	15.2	57	9
DeAndre Hopkins	HOU	96	1,378	14.4	72t	13
Le'Veon Bell	PIT	85	655	7.7	42	2
Travis Kelce	KC	83	1,038	12.5	44	8
Demaryius Thomas	DEN	83	949	11.4	40	5
Jack Doyle	IND	80	690	8.6	26	4
A.J. Green	CIN	75	1,078	14.4	77t	8
Tyreek Hill	KC	75	1,183	15.8	79t	7
Duke Johnson Jr.	CLE	74	693	9.4	41t	3
Delanie Walker	TEN	74	807	10.9	42	3
Rob Gronkowski	NE	69	1,084	15.7	53t	8
Brandin Cooks	NE	65	1,082	16.6	64t	7
Jermaine Kearse	NYJ	65	810	12.5	51	5
Robby Anderson	NYJ	63	941	14.9	69t	7
Danny Amendola	NE	61	659	10.8	27	2
Benjamin Watson	BAL	61	522	8.6	33t	4
LeSean McCoy	BUF	59	448	7.6	39	2
Michael Crabtree	OAK	58	618	10.7	41t	8
Melvin Gordon	LAC	58	476	8.2	49	4
JuJu Smith-Schuster	PIT	58	917	15.8	97t	7
Kenny Stills	MIA	58	847	14.6	61t	6
T.Y. Hilton	IND	57	966	16.9	80t	4
DeVante Parker	MIA	57	670	11.8	36	1
Marqise Lee	JAC	56	702	12.5	45	3
James White	NE	56	429	7.7	27	3
Jared Cook	OAK	54	688	12.7	35	2
Eric Decker	TEN	54	563	10.4	29	1
Kareem Hunt	KC	53	455	8.6	78t	3
Rishard Matthews	TEN	53	795	15.0	75t	4
Brandon LaFell	CIN	52	548	10.5	45	3
Mike Wallace	BAL	52	748	14.4	66	4
Martavis Bryant	PIT	50	603	12.1	51	3
A. Seferian-Jenkins	NYJ	50	357	7.1	28	3
Charles Clay	BUF	49	558	11.4	44	2
Amari Cooper	OAK	48	680	14.2	87t	7
Emmanuel Sanders	DEN	47	555	11.8	38	2
Javorius Allen	BAL	46	250	5.4	20	2

Los Angeles Rams
478 points

TEAM SCORING

TEAM	TD	TDR	TDP	TDM	XP	XPA	2PT	2PTA	FG	FGA	SAF	POINTS
Los Angeles Rams	51	17	28	6	48	51	0	0	40	43	2	478
Philadelphia Eagles	53	9	38	6	40	44	6	9	29	34	0	457
New Orleans Saints	51	23	23	5	47	50	1	1	31	36	0	448
Detroit Lions	46	10	29	7	40	41	2	5	30	35	0	410
Minnesota Vikings	41	15	25	1	34	39	2	2	32	38	1	382
Seattle Seahawks	43	4	34	5	37	38	2	3	21	29	2	366
Carolina Panthers	40	15	22	3	34	37	1	3	29	30	0	363
Dallas Cowboys	42	18	22	2	36	39	0	3	22	29	0	354
Atlanta Falcons	36	12	21	3	35	35	0	1	34	39	0	353
Washington Redskins	39	10	27	2	36	39	0	0	24	28	0	342
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	38	8	26	4	28	31	2	6	25	34	0	335
San Francisco 49ers	31	15	15	1	28	30	0	1	39	41	0	331
Green Bay Packers	40	13	25	2	33	35	1	3	15	19	0	320
Arizona Cardinals	29	6	21	2	23	26	1	2	32	40	0	295
Chicago Bears	31	13	13	5	26	28	1	2	16	22	1	264
New York Giants	28	6	20	2	20	23	1	5	18	25	1	246
NFC AVERAGE	39.9	12.1	24.3	3.5	34.1	36.6	1.3	2.9	27.3	32.6	0.4	359.0

PASSING

224+ ATTEMPTS	TEAM	ATT	COMP	PCT	YDS	AVG	TD	TD%	LONG	INT	INT%	SACKS	LOSS	RATING
Drew Brees	NO	536	386	72.0	4,334	8.1	23	4.3	54t	8	1.5	20	145	103.9
Carson Wentz	PHI	440	265	60.2	3,296	7.5	33	7.5	72t	7	1.6	28	162	101.9
Jared Goff	LAR	477	296	62.1	3,804	8.0	28	5.9	94t	7	1.5	25	172	100.5
Matthew Stafford	DET	565	371	65.7	4,446	7.9	29	5.1	71t	10	1.8	47	287	99.3
Case Keenum	MIN	481	325	67.6	3,547	7.4	22	4.6	65t	7	1.5	22	136	98.3
Aaron Rodgers	GB	238	154	64.7	1,675	7.0	16	6.7	72	6	2.5	22	168	97.2
Russell Wilson	SEA	553	339	61.3	3,983	7.2	34	6.1	74t	11	2.0	43	322	95.4
Kirk Cousins	WAS	540	347	64.3	4,093	7.6	27	5.0	74	13	2.4	41	342	93.9
Jameis Winston	TB	442	282	63.8	3,504	7.9	19	4.3	70	11	2.5	33	207	92.2
Matt Ryan	ATL	529	342	64.7	4,095	7.7	20	3.8	88t	12	2.3	24	156	91.4
Dak Prescott	DAL	490	308	62.9	3,324	6.8	22	4.5	81t	13	2.7	32	185	86.6
Carson Palmer	ARI	267	164	61.4	1,978	7.4	9	3.4	46	7	2.6	22	150	84.4
Cam Newton	CAR	492	291	59.1	3,302	6.7	22	4.5	64	16	3.3	35	242	80.7
Eli Manning	NYG	571	352	61.6	3,468	6.1	19	3.3	77t	13	2.3	31	189	80.4
Mitchell Trubisky	CHI	330	196	59.4	2,193	6.6	7	2.1	70	7	2.1	31	196	77.5
Brett Hundley	GB	316	192	60.8	1,836	5.8	9	2.8	55t	12	3.8	29	197	70.6
C.J. Beathard	SF	224	123	54.9	1,430	6.4	4	1.8	83t	6	2.7	19	141	69.2

NET PUNTING

41+ PUNTS	TEAM	NO	YARDS	LONG	AVG	TB	BLK	OPP RET	RET YDS	IN 20	NET AVG
Johnny Hekker	LAR	65	3,113	70	47.9	4	0	25	152	30	44.3
Michael Palardy	CAR	71	3,269	63	46.0	4	0	30	176	25	42.4
Thomas Morstead	NO	60	2,822	68	47.0	2	0	24	249	26	42.2
Justin Vogel	GB	71	3,155	62	44.4	2	0	29	164	19	41.6
Chris Jones	DAL	66	2,908	62	44.1	5	0	18	75	34	41.4
Bradley Pinion	SF	75	3,255	59	43.4	1	0	33	138	31	41.3
Matt Bosher	ATL	53	2,379	62	44.9	2	0	22	179	19	40.8
Donnie Jones	PHI	67	3,033	62	45.3	5	1	25	171	21	40.6
Andy Lee	ARI	88	4,159	63	47.3	8	0	48	506	29	39.7
Pat O'Donnell	CHI	87	4,087	69	47.0	6	0	49	512	27	39.7
Ryan Quigley	MIN	71	2,994	56	42.2	0	0	24	213	29	39.2
Tress Way	WAS	83	3,794	64	45.7	6	0	39	435	33	39.0
Jon Ryan	SEA	92	4,141	74	45.0	6	0	45	452	29	38.8
Bryan Anger	TB	65	2,857	62	44.0	5	1	27	153	24	38.5
Sam Martin	DET	41	1,779	64	43.4	6	0	14	116	13	37.6
Brad Wing	NYG	95	4,189	69	44.1	9	2	43	448	19	36.7

SCORING

KICKERS	TEAM	XP	XPA	FG	FGA	PTS
Greg Zuerlein	LAR	44	46	38	40	158
Robbie Gould	SF	28	30	39	41	145
Wil Lutz	NO	47	50	31	36	140
Matt Bryant	ATL	35	35	34	39	137
Kai Forbath	MIN	34	39	32	38	130
Matt Prater	DET	40	41	30	35	130
Graham Gano	CAR	34	37	29	30	121
Phil Dawson	ARI	23	26	32	40	119
Jake Elliott	PHI	39	42	26	31	117
Blair Walsh	SEA	37	38	21	29	100
Mason Crosby	GB	33	35	15	19	78
Patrick Murray	TB	21	22	19	23	78
Aldrick Rosas	NYG	20	23	18	25	74
Dan Bailey	DAL	26	28	15	20	71
Dustin Hopkins	WAS	18	19	14	17	60
Connor Barth	CHI	17	17	11	16	50

Drew Brees, New Orleans Saints
103.9 passer rating

NON-KICKERS	TEAM	TD	TDR	TDP	TDM	2PT	PTS
Todd Gurley	LAR	19	13	6	0	0	114
Alvin Kamara	NO	14	8	5	1	1	86
Mark Ingram	NO	12	12	0	0	0	72
Jimmy Graham	SEA	10	0	10	0	1	62
Davante Adams	GB	10	0	10	0	0	60
Alshon Jeffery	PHI	9	0	9	0	3	60
Nelson Agholor	PHI	9	0	8	1	0	54
Ezekiel Elliott	DAL	9	7	2	0	0	54
Jordan Howard	CHI	9	9	0	0	0	54
Marvin Jones	DET	9	0	9	0	0	54
Doug Baldwin	SEA	8	0	8	0	1	50
Tevin Coleman	ATL	8	5	3	0	0	48
Stefon Diggs	MIN	8	0	8	0	0	48
Zach Ertz	PHI	8	0	8	0	0	48
Devonta Freeman	ATL	8	7	1	0	0	48
Devin Funchess	CAR	8	0	8	0	0	48
Carlos Hyde	SF	8	8	0	0	0	48
Latavius Murray	MIN	8	8	0	0	0	48
Kyle Rudolph	MIN	8	0	8	0	0	48
Sammy Watkins	LAR	8	0	8	0	0	48
Christian McCaffrey	CAR	7	2	5	0	0	42
Jonathan Stewart	CAR	7	6	1	0	0	42
Corey Clement	PHI	6	4	2	0	1	38
Larry Fitzgerald	ARI	6	0	6	0	1	38
Cam Newton	CAR	6	6	0	0	1	38
Cameron Brate	TB	6	0	6	0	0	36
Dez Bryant	DAL	6	0	6	0	0	36
Josh Doctson	WAS	6	0	6	0	0	36
Evan Engram	NYG	6	0	6	0	0	36
O.J. Howard	TB	6	0	6	0	0	36
Jordy Nelson	GB	6	0	6	0	0	36
Dak Prescott	DAL	6	6	0	0	0	36
Paul Richardson	SEA	6	0	6	0	0	36
Chris Thompson	WAS	6	2	4	0	0	36
Jamaal Williams	GB	6	4	2	0	0	36

SACKS

4.5+ SACKS	TEAM	NO
Chandler Jones	ARI	17.0
Demarcus Lawrence	DAL	14.5
Everson Griffen	MIN	13.0
Cameron Jordan	NO	13.0
Ryan Kerrigan	WAS	13.0
Ziggy Ansah	DET	12.0
Mario Addison	CAR	11.0
Aaron Donald	LAR	11.0
Julius Peppers	CAR	11.0
Adrian Clayborn	ATL	9.5
Brandon Graham	PHI	9.5
Frank Clark	SEA	9.0
Michael Bennett	SEA	8.5
Akiem Hicks	CHI	8.5
Jason Pierre-Paul	NYG	8.5
Robert Quinn	LAR	8.5
Preston Smith	WAS	8.0
Clay Matthews	GB	7.5
Kawann Short	CAR	7.5
Danielle Hunter	MIN	7.0
David Irving	DAL	7.0
Nick Perry	GB	7.0
Elvis Dumervil	SF	6.5
Olivier Vernon	NYG	6.5
Anthony Zettel	DET	6.5
Gerald McCoy	TB	6.0
Takkarist McKinley	ATL	6.0
Fletcher Cox	PHI	5.5
Wes Horton	CAR	5.5
Matt Longacre	LAR	5.5
Olsen Pierre	ARI	5.5
Derek Barnett	PHI	5.0
Connor Barwin	LAR	5.0
Vic Beasley Jr.	ATL	5.0
Mike Daniels	GB	5.0
Anthony Lanier	WAS	5.0
Chris Long	PHI	5.0
Clinton McDonald	TB	5.0
Vonn Bell	NO	4.5
Michael Brockers	LAR	4.5
Kenny Clark	GB	4.5
Leonard Floyd	CHI	4.5
Matthew Ioannidis	WAS	4.5
Alex Okafor	NO	4.5

Chandler Jones, Arizona Cardinals
17.0 sacks

TACKLES

90+ TACKLES	TEAM	NO
Blake Martinez	GB	144
Deion Jones	ATL	138
Bobby Wagner	SEA	133
Zach Brown	WAS	127
Luke Kuechly	CAR	125
Keanu Neal	ATL	116
Eric Kendricks	MIN	113
Tahir Whitehead	DET	110
K.J. Wright	SEA	108
Landon Collins	NYG	104
Lavonte David	TB	101
Sean Lee	DAL	101
Kwon Alexander	TB	97
Jarrad Davis	DET	96
Karlos Dansby	ARI	95
Alec Ogletree	LAR	95
De'Vondre Campbell	ATL	92
Christian Jones	CHI	90

INTERCEPTIONS

2+ INTERCEPTIONS	TEAM	NO	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Darius Slay	DET	8	73	9.1	37	0
Antoine Bethea	ARI	5	51	10.2	21	0
Marshon Lattimore	NO	5	85	17.0	33	1
Harrison Smith	MIN	5	42	8.4	19	0
Kendall Fuller	WAS	4	4	1.0	3	0
Damarious Randall	GB	4	35	8.8	21t	1
Patrick Robinson	PHI	4	36	9.0	19	0
D.J. Swearinger	WAS	4	32	8.0	31	0
Marcus Williams	NO	4	12	3.0	12	0
Kwon Alexander	TB	3	70	23.3	28	0
Mark Barron	LAR	3	29	9.7	15	0
Ha Ha Clinton-Dix	GB	3	5	1.7	5	0
Ross Cockrell	NYG	3	1	0.3	1	0
Ronald Darby	PHI	3	42	14.0	37	0
Quandre Diggs	DET	3	28	9.3	16	0
Justin Evans	TB	3	28	9.3	15	0
Brent Grimes	TB	3	67	22.3	39	0
Jeff Heath	DAL	3	20	6.7	14	0
Janoris Jenkins	NYG	3	113	37.7	53t	2
Deion Jones	ATL	3	42	14.0	41	0
Lamarcus Joyner	LAR	3	104	34.7	46	1
Luke Kuechly	CAR	3	23	7.7	23	0
Robert McClain	TB	3	53	17.7	47t	1
Rodney McLeod	PHI	3	67	22.3	50	0
Jalen Mills	PHI	3	53	17.7	37t	1
Glover Quin	DET	3	62	20.7	37t	1
Kenny Vaccaro	NO	3	41	13.7	30	0
Mike Adams	CAR	2	42	21.0	40	0
James Bradberry	CAR	2	3	1.5	3	0
Anthony Brown	DAL	2	16	8.0	16	0
Bryce Callahan	CHI	2	73	36.5	52	0
Justin Coleman	SEA	2	58	29.0	30t	2
Landon Collins	NYG	2	21	10.5	21	0
Rasul Douglas	PHI	2	7	3.5	7	0
Kyle Fuller	CHI	2	0	0.0	0	0
Corey Graham	PHI	2	73	36.5	59	0
Eddie Jackson	CHI	2	82	41.0	76t	1
Malcolm Jenkins	PHI	2	0	0.0	0	0
Trumaine Johnson	LAR	2	39	19.5	39t	1
Tyrann Mathieu	ARI	2	16	8.0	15	0
Kevin Peterson	LAR	2	42	21.0	38	0
Eric Reid	SF	2	0	0.0	0	0
Xavier Rhodes	MIN	2	23	11.5	21	0
Craig Robertson	NO	2	20	10.0	20	0
Nickell Robey-Coleman	LAR	2	56	28.0	31	0
Andrew Sendejo	MIN	2	70	35.0	36	0
Kelvin Sheppard	NYG	2	17	8.5	12	0
Richard Sherman	SEA	2	20	10.0	19	0
Preston Smith	WAS	2	26	13.0	18	0
Earl Thomas	SEA	2	97	48.5	78t	1
Desmond Trufant	ATL	2	43	21.5	43	0
Bobby Wagner	SEA	2	7	3.5	7	0
Trae Waynes	MIN	2	21	10.5	18	0
Tramon Williams	ARI	2	12	6.0	12	0
P.J. Williams	NO	2	7	3.5	7	0
Ahkello Witherspoon	SF	2	42	21.0	23	0
Daryl Worley	CAR	2	0	0.0	0	0

KICK RETURNS

26+ RETURNS	TEAM	NO	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Pharoh Cooper	LAR	34	932	27.4	103t	1
Tyler Lockett	SEA	37	949	25.6	99t	1
Ryan Switzer	DAL	24	600	25.0	61	0
Trevor Davis	GB	31	707	22.8	34	0
Andre Roberts	ATL	38	860	22.6	61	0
Tarik Cohen	CHI	26	583	22.4	46	0

PUNT RETURNS

24+ RETURNS	TEAM	NO	FC	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Jamal Agnew	DET	29	16	447	15.4	88t	2
Pharoh Cooper	LAR	32	8	399	12.5	53	0
Trevor Davis	GB	24	22	289	12.0	65	0
Marcus Sherels	MIN	39	24	372	9.5	46	0
Trent Taylor	SF	30	16	281	9.4	39	0
Tarik Cohen	CHI	29	15	272	9.4	61t	1
Kenjon Barner	PHI	27	15	240	8.9	76	0
Ryan Switzer	DAL	29	10	256	8.8	83t	1
Andre Roberts	ATL	27	21	201	7.4	27	0
Tyler Lockett	SEA	36	21	237	6.6	27	0
Jamison Crowder	WAS	27	21	171	6.3	29	0

RUSHING

294+ YARDS	TEAM	NO	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Todd Gurley	LAR	279	1,305	4.7	57t	13
Mark Ingram	NO	230	1,124	4.9	72	12
Jordan Howard	CHI	276	1,122	4.1	53	9
Ezekiel Elliott	DAL	242	983	4.1	30	7
Carlos Hyde	SF	240	938	3.9	61	8
Devonta Freeman	ATL	196	865	4.4	44	7
Latavius Murray	MIN	216	842	3.9	46	8
LeGarrette Blount	PHI	173	766	4.4	68	2
Cam Newton	CAR	139	754	5.4	69	6
Orleans Darkwa	NYG	171	751	4.4	75t	5
Alvin Kamara	NO	120	728	6.1	74t	8
Jonathan Stewart	CAR	198	680	3.4	60t	6
Tevin Coleman	ATL	156	628	4.0	52	5
Samaje Perine	WAS	175	603	3.4	30	1
Russell Wilson	SEA	95	586	6.2	31	3
Jerick McKinnon	MIN	150	570	3.8	58t	3
Jamaal Williams	GB	153	556	3.6	25	4
Ameer Abdullah	DET	165	552	3.3	34	4
Alfred Morris	DAL	115	547	4.8	70	1
Wayne Gallman	NYG	111	476	4.3	24	0
Matt Breida	SF	105	465	4.4	33t	2
Aaron Jones	GB	81	448	5.5	46t	4
Adrian Peterson	ARI	129	448	3.5	27t	2
Christian McCaffrey	CAR	117	435	3.7	40	2
Kerwynn Williams	ARI	120	426	3.6	25	1
Peyton Barber	TB	108	423	3.9	34	3
Jay Ajayi	PHI	70	408	5.8	71	1
Doug Martin	TB	138	406	2.9	27	3
Tarik Cohen	CHI	87	370	4.3	46	2
Dak Prescott	DAL	57	357	6.3	21	6
Dalvin Cook	MIN	74	354	4.8	33	2
Corey Clement	PHI	74	321	4.3	28	4
Carson Wentz	PHI	64	299	4.7	24	0
Chris Thompson	WAS	64	294	4.6	61t	2

RECEPTIONS

48+ CATCHES	TEAM	NO	YARDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Larry Fitzgerald	ARI	109	1,156	10.6	37	6
Michael Thomas	NO	104	1,245	12.0	43	5
Golden Tate	DET	92	1,003	10.9	71t	5
Adam Thielen	MIN	91	1,276	14.0	65t	4
Julio Jones	ATL	88	1,444	16.4	53	3
Alvin Kamara	NO	81	826	10.2	40	5
Christian McCaffrey	CAR	80	651	8.1	37	5
Doug Baldwin	SEA	75	991	13.2	54	8
Davante Adams	GB	74	885	12.0	55t	10
Zach Ertz	PHI	74	824	11.1	53	8
Mike Evans	TB	71	1,001	14.1	42t	5
Dez Bryant	DAL	69	838	12.1	50t	6
Mohamed Sanu	ATL	67	703	10.5	25	5
Randall Cobb	GB	66	653	9.9	46	4
Jamison Crowder	WAS	66	789	12.0	41	3
Stefon Diggs	MIN	64	849	13.3	59t	8
Evan Engram	NYG	64	722	11.3	35	6
Todd Gurley	LAR	64	788	12.3	80t	6
Devin Funchess	CAR	63	840	13.3	44	8
Jason Witten	DAL	63	560	8.9	28t	5
Nelson Agholor	PHI	62	768	12.4	72t	8
Cooper Kupp	LAR	62	869	14.0	64	5
Adam Humphries	TB	61	631	10.3	43	1
Marvin Jones	DET	61	1,101	18.0	58	9
Carlos Hyde	SF	59	350	5.9	18	0
Sterling Shepard	NYG	59	731	12.4	77t	2
Kendall Wright	CHI	59	614	10.4	22	1
Mark Ingram	NO	58	416	7.2	54	0
Jimmy Graham	SEA	57	520	9.1	33	10
Alshon Jeffery	PHI	57	789	13.8	53	9
Kyle Rudolph	MIN	57	532	9.3	34	8
Marquise Goodwin	SF	56	962	17.2	83t	2
Robert Woods	LAR	56	781	13.9	94t	5
Tarik Cohen	CHI	53	353	6.7	70	1
Eric Ebron	DET	53	574	10.8	44	4
Ted Ginn Jr.	NO	53	787	14.8	54t	4
Jordy Nelson	GB	53	482	9.1	58	6
Theo Riddick	DET	53	444	8.4	63	2
Terrance Williams	DAL	53	568	10.7	56	0
Jerick McKinnon	MIN	51	421	8.3	41	2
DeSean Jackson	TB	50	668	13.4	41	3
Austin Hooper	ATL	49	526	10.7	88t	3
Cameron Brate	TB	48	591	12.3	35	6

JONES: RALPH FRESO / AP

AFC

AFC EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
New England	13	3	0	.813	458	296
Buffalo*	9	7	0	.563	302	359
Miami	6	10	0	.375	281	393
N.Y. Jets	5	11	0	.313	298	382

AFC NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	13	3	0	.813	406	308
Baltimore	9	7	0	.563	395	303
Cincinnati	7	9	0	.438	290	349
Cleveland	0	16	0	.000	234	410

AFC SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Jacksonville	10	6	0	.625	417	268
Tennessee*	9	7	0	.563	334	356
Houston	4	12	0	.250	338	436
Indianapolis	4	12	0	.250	263	404

AFC WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Kansas City	10	6	0	.625	415	339
L.A. Chargers	9	7	0	.563	355	272
Oakland	6	10	0	.375	301	373
Denver	5	11	0	.313	289	382

NFC

NFC EAST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Philadelphia	13	3	0	.813	457	295
Dallas	9	7	0	.563	354	332
Washington	7	9	0	.438	342	388
N.Y. Giants	3	13	0	.188	246	388

NFC NORTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
Minnesota	13	3	0	.813	382	252
Detroit	9	7	0	.563	410	376
Green Bay	7	9	0	.438	320	384
Chicago	5	11	0	.313	264	320

NFC SOUTH	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
New Orleans	11	5	0	.688	448	326
Carolina*	11	5	0	.688	363	327
Atlanta*	10	6	0	.625	353	315
Tampa Bay	5	11	0	.313	335	382

NFC WEST	W	L	T	PCT	PF	PA
L.A. Rams	11	5	0	.688	478	329
Seattle	9	7	0	.563	366	332
Arizona	8	8	0	.500	295	361
San Francisco	6	10	0	.375	331	383

*wild card

PLAYOFFS

WILD-CARD GAMES

Tennessee	22		Atlanta	26
Kansas City	21		L.A. Rams	13
Buffalo	3		Carolina	26
Jacksonville	10		New Orleans	31

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

Tennessee	14		Atlanta	10
New England	35		Philadelphia	15
Jacksonville	45		New Orleans	24
Pittsburgh	42		Minnesota	29

CHAMPIONSHIP

Jacksonville	20		Minnesota	7
New England	24		Philadelphia	38

Nick Foles, Super Bowl 52 MVP
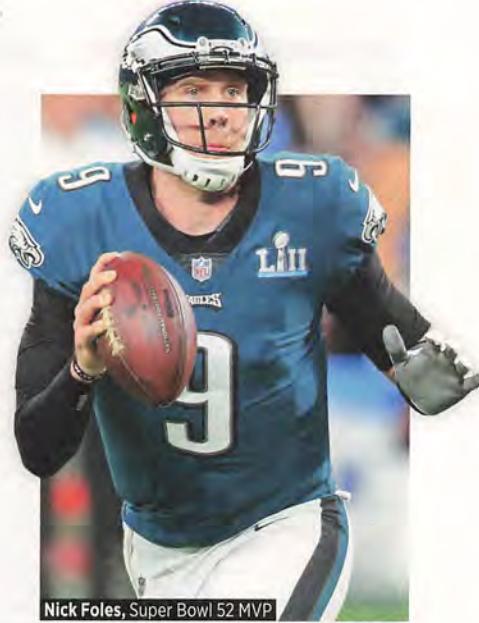
WILD-CARD GAME RESULTS

AFC

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Tennessee	0	3	7	12	22
Kansas City	14	7	0	0	21

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Buffalo	0	3	0	0	3
Jacksonville	0	3	7	0	10

NFC

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Atlanta	6	7	6	7	26
L.A. Rams	0	10	0	3	13

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Carolina	0	9	3	14	26
New Orleans	7	14	3	7	31

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFF RESULTS

AFC

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Tennessee	7	0	0	7	14
New England	0	21	7	7	35

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Jacksonville	14	14	0	17	45
Pittsburgh	0	14	7	21	42

NFC

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Atlanta	3	7	0	0	10
Philadelphia	0	9	3	3	15

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
New Orleans	0	0	7	17	24
Minnesota	10	7	0	12	29

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

AFC

Jacksonville at New England

TEAM STATS	JAC	NE
Total net rushing	101	46
Total net passing	273	298
Total net yards	374	344
First downs	22	22
Sacked-yards lost	3-20	3-12
Third-down conversions	6-15	3-12
Fourth-down conversions	0-1	1-1
Time of possession	35:08	24:52

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Jacksonville	0	14	3	3	20
New England	3	7	0	14	24

NFC

Minnesota at Philadelphia

TEAM STATS	MIN	PHI
Total net rushing	70	110
Total net passing	263	346
Total net yards	333	456
First downs	22	27
Sacked-yards lost	1-8	1-6
Third-down conversions	6-13	10-14
Fourth-down conversions	0-2	0-0
Time of possession	25:56	34:04

SCORING	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Minnesota	7	0	0	0	7
Philadelphia	7	17	7	7	38

SUPER BOWL LII

U.S. Bank Stadium | Minneapolis, MN

Feb. 4, 2018 Attendance: 67,612

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
PHILADELPHIA	9	13	7	12	41
NEW ENGLAND	3	9	14	7	33

SCORING

	QTR	TIME	
PHI	1	7:55	Elliott 25-yard field goal
NE	1	4:17	Gostkowski 26-yard field goal
PHI	1	2:34	Jeffery 34-yard pass from Foles (kick failed)
PHI	2	8:48	Blount 21-yard run (pass failed)
NE	2	7:24	Gostkowski 45-yard field goal
NE	2	2:04	White 26-yard run (kick failed)
PHI	2	0:34	Foles 1-yard pass from Burton (Elliott kick)
NE	3	12:15	Gronkowski 5-yard pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick)
PHI	3	7:18	Clement 22-yard pass from Foles (Elliott kick)
NE	3	3:23	Hogan 26-yard pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick)
PHI	4	14:09	Elliott 42-yard field goal
NE	4	9:22	Gronkowski 4-yard pass from Brady (Gostkowski kick)
PHI	4	2:21	Ertz 11-yard pass from Foles (pass failed)
PHI	4	1:05	Elliott 46-yard field goal

TEAM STATS

	PHI	NE
Total net rushing	164	113
Total net passing	374	500
Total net yards	538	613
First downs	25	29
Sacked-yards lost	0-0	1-5
Third-down conversions	10-16	5-10
Fourth-down conversions	2-2	1-2
Time of possession	34:04	25:56

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING

NE White 7-45-1 TD, Lewis 9-39, Burkhead 3-18, Brady 1-6, Hogan 1-4, Cooks 1-1

PHI Blount 14-90-1 TD, Ajayi 9-57, Agholor 1-9, Clement 3-8

PASSING

NE Brady 28-48-505-3 TD-0 INT, Amendola 0-1-0-0 TD-0 INT

PHI Foles 28-43-373-3 TD-1 INT, Burton 1-1-1-1 TD-0 INT

RECEIVING

NE Amendola 8-152, Hogan 6-128-1 TD, Gronkowski 9-116-2 TD, Burkhead 1-46, Cooks 1-23, White 2-21, Dorsett 1-19

PHI Clement 4-100-1 TD, Agholor 9-84, Jeffery 3-73-1 TD, Ertz 7-67-1 TD, Smith 5-49, Foles 1-1-1 TD

SACKS

NE None

PHI B. Graham 1.0

FOLES: GREGORY PAYAN / AP

When, oh when, will the Browns deliver?

BY STEVE DOERSCHUK
Canton (Ohio) Repository

Frank Caliendo grew up in Packers country, that happy haven where citizens have been subjected to three losing seasons in a quarter century.

The impressionist/comic found himself in a casino near Cleveland, where the Browns moved to Baltimore when Brett Favre was a glint in John Madden's eye and then came back as the worst perpetuators of fanbase pain the NFL has ever witnessed.

Caliendo acknowledged the freshly forged pièce de résistance in the backwards masterpiece that has been the Expansion Era.

"Oh ... and ... six-teeeeen?" he asked, engaging a crowd full of middle-aged men. "How about if I get 10 of you to play a season with me? We can brag about having the same record as the Cleveland Browns.'"

The show goes on with new general manager John Dorsey, who has spent most of his adult life in Green Bay as a player, scout and front-office exec. "Let's wake up this sleeping giant," he said at his introductory press conference last December. And then he shook.

Dorsey soon wrote off two recent high draft picks and had deals in place for veteran starters at quarterback, wide receiver and cornerback. He barged ahead with a fistful of dollars and draft picks. He carried himself with the bearing he once applied to slobber-knocking return men as a commando on the Packers' special teams.

The honeymoon was on at least until the season opener. The Browns have lost 19 of the last 20 of those. This dates to 1995, when Bill Belichick's Browns lost their opener to the Patriots. The move to Baltimore was announced two months later.

While the Cleveland franchise was dormant from 1996-98, Ozzie Newsome (the only Browns draft pick of the last 50 years to make the Hall of Fame) emerged as a personnel guru for the Browns-turned-Ravens in Baltimore. Newsome's rosters capped the 2000 and 2012 seasons with Super Bowl wins.

Ex-Brown Belichick has taken the Patriots to eight Super Bowls. Cleveland and Detroit are the only cities in the NFL that have had franchises since 1995 to never reach a Super Bowl.

Mike Holmgren, who coached the Packers and Seahawks to Super Bowls, failed as the Browns' team president from 2010-12. He thinks Dorsey can succeed. Dorsey followed Holmgren from Green Bay, where he was director of college scouting during 1997-98, to Seattle as director of player personnel in 1999. That lasted a year.

"I love John," Holmgren says. "He's a superstar. He really is. But at the time ... as my director of player personnel? I could never find him. He was always at some little college.

"I said, 'John, you're the director now, not the super scout.' I didn't fire John. He went back to Green Bay," where Dorsey reclaimed his old job and stayed in it until 2012 when he was named director of football operations for the Packers.

Dorsey went from Green Bay to Kansas City as general manager in 2013. The Chiefs did fire him—last year, after he conducted his fifth draft with the team. In that the Chiefs went 2-14 in 2012 and are 53-27 since, the firing remains mysterious. But so is the fact that Dorsey inherits a head coach (Hue Jackson) who was retained despite a 1-31 record.

It makes sense to Holmgren that Browns owner Jimmy Haslam, who got rid of him in 2012 and has had a nightmare ride ever since, turned to Dorsey. "John will get it going," Holmgren says. "If the Browns find a quarterback, everything will fall into place."

The Browns have passed on Tom Brady, Ben Roethlisberger, Aaron Rodgers, Carson Wentz, Deshaun Watson and other notable quarterbacks in the draft. Roethlisberger is the draft pass that keeps hitting Cleveland between the eyes. He is 22-2 against the Browns across 14 seasons. During that time, the Browns have drafted Luke McCown, Charlie Frye, Brady Quinn, Colt McCoy, Brandon Weeden, Johnny Manziel and DeShone Kizer. That group of QBs played a combined 14 seasons as Browns, posting a record of 22-77.

Haslam was sitting beside Dorsey when he said, "The Cleveland Browns are not going to be successful until we get a quarterback."

"The Era," as they call it in Cleveland, began with a 2-14 record in 1999, when rookie No. 1 overall pick Tim Couch made 14 starts. Since then, the Browns have gone 4-12 five times, 5-11 four times, 3-13 twice and (across the last two seasons) 1-15 and 0-16.

In the last 10 years, the Browns are 84 games under .500 with six head coaches and 19 starting quarterbacks. AFC North rivals Pittsburgh and Baltimore have reached the postseason a combined 13 times without changing head coaches or primary quarterbacks.

Rival Bengals fans are fed up with a lack of playoff wins, but Cincinnati has gone to the postseason six times since 2009, employing one head coach and two primary QBs.

The fans find the franchise's futility hard to fathom. Perpetual turnover has begotten constant losing. One new decision-maker after another has tried to rebuild by trading for extra draft picks.

Dorsey inherited 2018 selections at Nos. 1, 4, 33, 35, 64 and 65. He did not inherit (as he puts it) enough "real players." Three first-round picks from 2017 (Myles Garrett, Jabrill Peppers, David Njoku) need to stir synergy with another infusion of young talent led by No. 1 overall pick Baker Mayfield and No. 4 selection Denzel Ward.

Ten-time Pro Bowl tackle Joe Thomas raged against the darkness for 11 years in Cleveland before retiring from the madness in March.

"My dream has been to run out of the tunnel when the Browns host a playoff game," says Thomas, 33. "The atmosphere would be like no place else. Throw an experienced quarterback into the mix, and nothing says the Browns can't make the playoffs."

The Chiefs went 2-14 before a new general manager (Dorsey) added veteran QB Alex Smith and went to town. It remains to be seen what Dorsey-acquired veteran Tyrod Taylor, endorsed by Thomas, can do for the 2018 Browns before they inevitably turn to rookie savior/signal-caller Mayfield.

It's hard to compare the Browns to any franchise that has dug out of chronic losing. Who has been this bad for this long?

Cleveland is in a 10-year drought of 38-122. When the Chiefs went 2-14, it merely dragged their 10-year record to 68-92.

New Orleans' miserable expansion startup crossed the period when the schedule expanded from 14 to 16 games. Fans wore bags on their heads with "Aints" written on the outside. After going 36-99-5 in their first 10 seasons, the Saints were 54-97 the next 10 years. The 2018 Browns must go 16-0 to get to 54 wins in their expansion era's second set of 10 seasons.

Steve Doerschuk has covered the Browns as a beat writer for more years than he cares to remember.